

HAROLD WARE

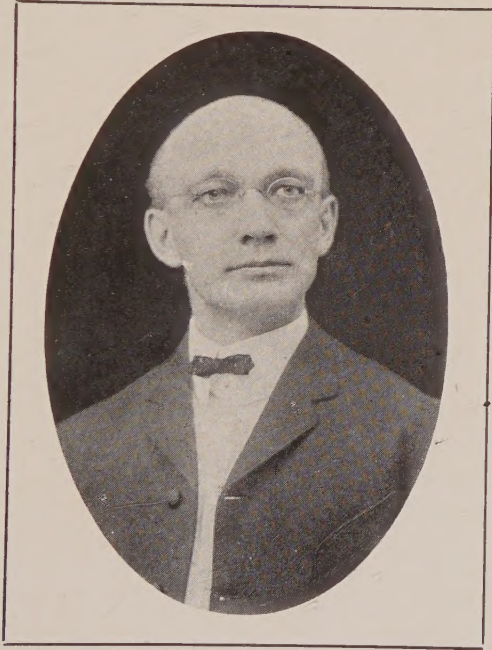
BY J. F. SCHUREMAN



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WITH THE COMPLIMENTS OF THE AUTHOR

J. F. Shureman

COMMENDATORY

I consider your story, "Harold Ware," an excellent piece of work. The style, tone, interest and all is complete. You are to be congratulated.—(REV.) J. M. SCHNEIDER, Morris, Ill.

I want to congratulate you on your story, "Harold Ware." It is as smooth a piece of fiction as I have read for some time.—MICHAEL K. BOYER, Hammonton, N. J.

"Harold Ware" is a very interesting story, with good morals, and the reading of it has a tendency to prompt one to live a better life.—E. GEORGE PARKER, Hooper, Utah.

I have read your story, "Harold Ware," and consider it one of the most masterly and best stories I have ever read.—GEO. M. McBREEN, Portland, Ore.

I seldom read works of fiction, but I believe "Harold Ware" to be a true story. I read it with much interest.—A. MCGILL, Spearfish, S. D.

Have just finished reading the story, "Harold Ware," and feel that this book is deserving a place in my library.—J. D. OWENS, Morris, Ill.

Your story, "Harold Ware," is very interesting. I admire the stand for temperance (so much needed) and uprightness of character.—MRS. DENTON COLE, Binghamton, N. Y.

"Harold Ware" is the best story I have ever read.—MRS. MARSHALL TRUMBULL, Sherwood, Mich.

I consider "Harold Ware" one of the best stories ever written and one that should be read by everybody.—A. A. WHYLAND, Chatham, New York.

"Harold Ware" is the best story I ever read.—R. BAXTER, Hamilton, Ont., Canada.

"Harold Ware" is an excellent piece of work. I consider it far superior to many of the stories published in the leading magazines.—F. J. TIPTON, Hannibal, Mo.

"Harold Ware" is the best story I ever read, and I have read a good many, as I am 64 years old.—GEO. H. GODFREY, Plerson, Mich.

Having read your story, "Harold Ware," I commend it very highly for its strong temperance sentiment and its realistic features. I am greatly interested in helping to give the book wide circulation for the immense good it will do.—C. N. GRAVES, Centralia, Wash.

"Harold Ware" is an excellent piece of work and ought to be in every home where there are boys.—C. F. NUHFER, Woodville, O.

I enjoyed the story, "Harold Ware," very much. It seemed so real—not like fiction—and probably was a true story.—CLARA BUTLER, Appleton City, Missouri.

Allow me to congratulate you upon your excellent story, "Harold Ware."—R. A. TURNER, Jefferson, Wis.

"Harold Ware" is one of the best stories I ever read and I want to make a present of it to one of my best little girl friends.—JACOB SCHWAB, Anoka, Minnesota.

Your story is a fine thing indeed. How faithfully human nature is portrayed in every chapter.—J. D. PERKINS, Heyworth, Ill.

Every member of my family has enjoyed the "Harold Ware" story very much.—J. WARREN LOVETT, York, Pa.

I think "Harold Ware" is the best story I ever read in my life.—JOHN YAW, Copeville, Texas.

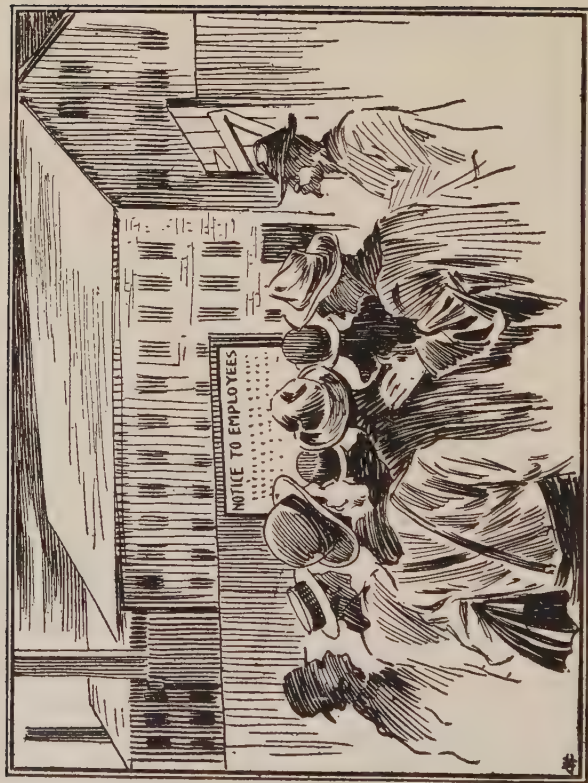
"Harold Ware" is one of the best stories I have ever read. I want to get 10 copies of the book.—GEO. REHBEIN, Canton, Kansas.

I wish to commend in strong terms the stand for temperance in your story, "Harold Ware." All these influences count.—M. P. PAGE, Olympia, Wash.

Your "Harold Ware" story is simply a dandy. We like it.—W. F. RICHTER, Cleveland, Ohio.

I think "Harold Ware" is the best story I ever read.—MRS. ESTHER FRELING, Westfield, N. Y.

Your story, "Harold Ware," is a peach.—R. H. WILSON, Lewistown, Pa.



"The employees stood in groups reading the notices and discussing the situation."

HAROLD WARE

A Story of Passion, Pathos and Poultry

Founded on the Financial
Panic of 1907-1908

By
J. F. SCHUREMAN
Editor Commercial Poultry

ILLUSTRATED

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CHAPTER I.

NOTICE TO EMPLOYEES.

OWING TO THE FINANCIAL DEPRESSION AND THE CONSEQUENT STAGNATION OF BUSINESS THE COUNTRY OVER, THIS FACTORY WILL BE CLOSED ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23, AND WILL REMAIN CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.



THE employes of the DuBois Manufacturing Company in the little town of Linville were not much surprised when the above notice was posted at each of the entrances to the great factory, for they had been expecting it for a week or more, although hoping against hope that financial and industrial matters would take a turn for the better and that work would be continued without any interruption whatever. They knew that the entire country had been plunged into a financial panic and that there was a stringency in the money market that threatened disaster to the industries of the country, large and small, but had hoped that somehow the tide would be stemmed and that the worst that could happen would be a slight cut in their wages or a reduction of the working hours. They knew, however, that the closing of the factory was a possibility, and the posting of the notices did not come to them entirely as a surprise.

The closing of the factory meant much to the several hundred employes, many of whom had not saved a single dollar for the proverbial "rainy day," and, in fact, a number of them were in debt. Winter was coming on, the prices of fuel and food were high, and merchants, on account of the scarcity of money and stagnation of business generally, were drawing the credit lines tighter and tighter.

Among those who stood in groups reading the signs and discussing the situation on this chill November morning was one employe to whom the announcement of the closing

of the factory meant more, perhaps, than to anyone else. This was Harold Ware. He was one of the first to reach the factory on this particular morning and consequently one of the first to read the notice that had been posted the night before. The message pierced his heart like a dagger, and without saying a word to any of his companions who had gathered, he passed on into the factory and prepared for the day's work.

While many of the other employes had only themselves to blame for the fact that they had failed to save any of their earnings, much of which had been spent in riotous living, not so with Harold Ware. He was an exemplary man in every respect, with no expensive or vicious habits, but, like most of the other employes, he was out of funds at this time, and the closing of the factory meant hardship and privation—and perhaps suffering—for himself and family, should work not be resumed for several weeks or months.

Time was when Harold Ware could have faced an enforced idleness of a few months or a year without a tremor of fear, for he had in years past carefully saved a portion of his earnings each month and had accumulated a very respectable bank account. Something like a year previous to the opening of our story he thought he saw a chance to invest his savings at a good profit, being urged to do so by a friend in whose judgment he had the greatest confidence, and in less than six months he had lost all. He had only commenced to get on his feet again, financially, when he was stricken with a fever and for two months he was unable to work. During this time his little hoard was entirely consumed and it was necessary to borrow some money, giving a mortgage on his household goods as security. He had been back at his work less than a week when the announcement was made that the factory would close indefinitely.

He worked through the day with a heavy heart, and while some of his companions joked with each other about the prospects for the winter, it was anything but a joke to Harold Ware. He thought of his wife at home to whom he must break the news in the evening, and he wondered if she would still be the courageous little woman she had

proved herself during all the fifteen years of their married life. How he dreaded to inflict the pain that must be hers when she heard the news.

Finally the day's work was finished and the employes left the factory in groups, but Harold Ware started off alone toward his little home. Arriving there, he took his little wife whom he loved so well in his arms and told her of the closing of the factory and of the gloomy prospects for the winter.

"My poor little girl," he said, "it seems as though I have only been a burden to you ever since we were married, and I often wonder if you do not sometimes wish you had married another—one who could have given you what every woman must desire, a nice home with fine furnishings, nice clothes, an automobile and other things that only those who have money can afford. Sometimes I almost wish—"

"Harold!" exclaimed Mrs. Ware, "please don't say another word along that line. I know what you were about to say, and I am sure if you knew how it grieves me to know that you even think of such a thing, you would never allude to it again. I have never regretted that I married you, and tonight, even though the future does not look as bright as it might, I am glad that I am the wife of Harold Ware, and I am sure that I am happier here in this little home, modest though it is, than I would be in the finest palace in the land, the wife of anyone else in the whole world. It is love that makes happiness, and not fine homes, fine furnishings or fine clothes. My greatest happiness comes from the knowledge of the fact that my husband loves me, though why you do I do not know, and sometimes it seems as though I am unworthy of your love. I grieve to think that I did not in early life—when I had the opportunity—learn some trade or profession, so that now I could be of assistance to you and help to earn money to pay our household expenses. I can sew, of course, but can only do plain sewing, and there is no demand for that kind of work. Oh, if I could only do something—anything! You are not strong, Harold, and even if the factory was not to shut down, I don't believe you could stand the work long. But let's have supper and you will feel better."

So saying, Mrs. Ware busied herself getting supper on the table. It did not take long, for it was a frugal meal—toast and tea and potatoes. When the meal was ready, Mrs. Ware called their 12-year-old son, Harry, and the three sat down to supper.

"How long will the factory be closed?" asked Mrs. Ware as she poured the tea.

"No one knows," replied Mr. Ware. "I heard Mr. Bascom, the manager, say that it was impossible for anyone to even guess when financial conditions would warrant them in re-opening the works. They have plenty of orders ahead, but can't get hold of the money to pay the operating expenses, and then, besides, orders are being cancelled every day. The outlook is not encouraging, to say the least."

"My! I don't know what the poor people will do," said Mrs. Ware. "Mrs. Beman was in this afternoon and said another of the McConnell children was down with the fever. This makes three children sick in the family and Mrs. McConnell is nearly worn out taking care of them. They have no money to hire a nurse or help of any kind, and Mr. McConnell isn't at home only long enough to get something to eat twice a day. Of course he sleeps at home, but he don't get home at night until eleven o'clock, and he comes home then only because the saloons close at half past ten and there is no other place to go. I pity Mrs. McConnell. Jimmy, the oldest boy, is getting better and is sitting up, so Mrs. Beman said, but he is very weak. He needs nourishment and the doctor said he could have a poached egg twice a day, but eggs cost money these days and the poor boy has had to go without until today. Mrs. Beman came over on purpose to see if she could get two or three eggs to send to Mrs. McConnell for Jimmy—enough to nourish him a little, anyway. Harry had nearly five dozen saved up and was going to take them to Mr. Smith, the banker, tomorrow. Mr. Smith told Harry he would pay him five cents a dozen above market price for fresh eggs and would take five dozen each week if Harry could furnish them. Our hens are just beginning to lay again, after the molt, and I guess we will have no trouble

in supplying Mr. Smith. But, as I was saying, Mrs. Beman wanted two or three eggs for Jimmy McConnell, and after she told me how hard up they were and what the doctor said, I made up my mind that Jimmy was going to have fresh eggs whether he had money or not, and I told Mrs. Beman we would furnish him two eggs a day for the next month, and more if necessary. She took a half dozen and I suppose Jimmy had the first one tonight. You remember, Harold, where it says in the Good Book, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these,' and so on."

"Yes, my dear," replied Mr. Ware, "I know the passage of scripture you refer to and I believe a record is kept in heaven of these little acts of kindness and that some day we will receive our reward. We are poor ourselves, and I hardly know how we are going to get through the winter, unless things take a decided turn in our favor. But poor little Jimmy needs the eggs, as they are nourishing, and proper nourishment is what he needs just now more than anything else. He is a good boy, so unlike his father, and I hope that he may grow up to be an honest, sober, manly man, who will see that his poor mother is well taken care of in her old age. She has known nothing but slavery and privation ever since she married McConnell, and it is to be hoped that the future holds better things in store for her. See that Jimmy gets his eggs even if you must cut down Banker Smith's supply."

During the foregoing conversation between his father and mother, little Harry Ware had sat in silence, for he was a mannerly little fellow and had been taught that it was rude for children to break in upon the conversation of their elders. Now, however, that the discussion of this particular subject seemed to have reached its end, he said:

"Say, papa, if we had enough hens and could sell all the eggs at five cents a dozen above market price, we wouldn't care if the factory never opened up again, would we?"

"Tut, tut, my boy," replied Mr. Ware. "You forget that there are a couple hundred families in this town dependent upon the factory for their bread and butter. It is selfish, son, to think only of our own welfare, although it is human nature to think of one's own welfare first. Let us hope that

the factory will be closed down only a very short time, if it must be closed at all, as it would mean great hardship and suffering should it be closed for any length of time.

"I know that, papa," said Harry, "but ain't you glad we have the chickens and can sell eggs and get a little money that way? Most everybody in this town has got a few chickens, but most of them are scrubs that don't lay many eggs, and only a few of them have warm poultry houses, and I read in the poultry paper that even good hens won't lay if they are kept in cold houses where they get their combs and gills frozen, and their feet, too, sometimes. If good hens won't lay in cold houses, scrub hens surely won't. I am glad we got our poultry house fixed up last fall. It is nice and warm in there now. Bert Dickenson was over today and said they weren't getting a single egg. They've got a lot of hens, but they are just common ones, and they are half froze to death all the time. Bert's father told him he guessed they had better sell the whole lot to the butcher, because it takes so much to feed them and they don't get any eggs at all. That makes me think of another thing I read in the poultry paper. It said that it took a good deal more food for chickens in a cold house than in a warm one, because some part of the food—I forget what it is called—was burned in the hen's body to keep her warm, and the more of this that was burned the more it would take. I don't just understand it, but it looks to me as if it would be cheaper to build warm poultry houses than to furnish so much food. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, my boy, you are right," replied Mr. Ware. "To make any money out of chickens it is necessary. first, that they be of a good egg-laying strain and breed, and, second, that they be warmly housed in winter and properly fed. When I bought those White Leghorns for you a year ago I was careful to get birds that had been bred for heavy egg-production, as well as fancy points, and then I built the poultry house with the idea of having it warm in winter, for it is in the winter time that we want eggs, when they bring a good price. Most any hens will lay in summer, when eggs are not worth much. By the way, my boy, are you pretty near out of feed?"

"O, no," answered Harry, "there is quite a bit left, probably enough for two weeks yet. I get bones at the butcher shop two or three times a week and cut them up with the hatchet for the chickens; then every morning I take a bushel basket over to Brisbane's feed stable and get a basket of sweepings from the floor where the hay is thrown down from the loft. The chickens work in this all day, picking out the tiny seeds. This keeps them busy, and a writer in the poultry paper says hens should be kept busy."

"A very good idea, Harry," said his father. "I had planned on your taking some of your Leghorns to the poultry show at Dexter next month, but now that the factory is going to be closed and money scarce with us, guess we will have to give it up. I believe you could win some prizes on your birds at this show, and this would help you to get rid of some of those cockerels at good prices. They are well bred, and, as far as I know, are good specimens of their variety. You might put a small ad in the poultry paper and sell a few of them, but to get really good prices it is necessary to have a show record behind them. Perhaps conditions may change by show time so that you can go after all. It is only thirty miles over there."

During this conversation between father and son, Mrs. Ware had removed the dishes from the table and done up her evening work. She was glad to have Mr. Ware interested in anything that would take his mind away—even partially—from the misfortune that had overtaken them—the closing of the factory.

Mr. Ware was not especially interested in poultry, but to encourage his son and keep him from running the streets, he had bought him a pen of White Leghorns a year before and built him a small but comfortable poultry house. Harry had become interested at once, and with the first money he received from the sale of eggs he subscribed for several good poultry papers and studied them diligently. As he read of the success of other and older breeders, he resolved to do even better than any of them had done, and with this idea uppermost in his mind he worked with his fowls each day, when not in school, and his interest in and attention to the enterprise was a source of gratification to his par-

ents. Harry was an only child and his parents naturally idolized him. He was christened "Harold," after his father, but to avoid confusion they called him "Harry."

Having finished her evening work, Mrs. Ware sat down again with her husband, and as it was Harry's bedtime, he bade his parents good-night and went to his room opening off the combination sitting room and parlor. Mrs. Ware had some mending to do, and while she worked they talked over the situation. It was Thursday evening, and the factory was to close on Saturday. Mrs. Ware tried to cheer her husband up, but the future looked dark—very dark—to him, and the more he talked and thought of it, the darker it got.

"I see today's paper says that eighty millions of dollars worth of gold is being brought over from Europe and that one boat carrying thirteen millions is expected in New York on Saturday," said Mr. Ware. "This will not go very far toward relieving the stringency. It isn't imported gold we want so much as to get the currency already in the country into circulation. There is plenty of money in the country if it was kept moving, but it is being hoarded up and a stringency is the natural result."

"When Mrs. Beman was over today," said Mrs. Ware, "she said her husband told her that the hard times were caused by the Standard Oil Company, Morgan, Rockefeller and other rich men, who had tied up the finances of the whole country just to show what they could do if they wanted to. She said Mr. Beman told her that these rich men do not like President Roosevelt because he is after the corporations and that they brought this panic on for political purposes. I guess Mr. Beman is quite a reader, and then he spends his evenings in Buckwalter's grocery store, where the politicians gather each evening and talk over things in general."

"The cause of the panic does not interest me so much as the question of its probable duration," said Mr. Ware. "I don't know what in the world we will do if the factory remains closed for any length of time. I will have one week's wages coming Saturday night, and goodness only knows when I will have another pay-day. It would be use-

less to look elsewhere for work, for the same condition exists everywhere."

Mrs. Ware went on with her mending, and as her husband did not speak or move for some minutes, she looked up and saw that he had fallen asleep. She was glad of it, for it grieved her to see him worry. She had done her best to conceal the fact from him, but in spite of all her efforts to check it, there was a feeling of dread in her heart and she hardly dared to think of the future, should conditions remain unchanged for any length of time. She understood the situation thoroughly and knew that the prospects for getting through the winter were anything but encouraging. Her husband's words, "I don't know what in the world we will do!" kept ringing in her ears. She thought of their scanty hoard and of the borrowed money that must be returned, and a doctor bill and grocery bill, both past due and which ought to be paid.

These were followed by other and different thoughts. As she sat there in the death-like stillness, her mind wandered back to her girlhood home in New England—a home from which she had been ostracized from the time she married Harold Ware; a home in which there was plenty and to spare, but nothing for her or hers. She wondered if her parents ever thought of her. She had committed no crime to turn them against her, unless they considered her marriage to the man she loved a crime simply because it was against their wishes. Her parents had planned for her marriage to another, a young man of wealthy parentage and with bright prospects in his chosen profession of the law. The young man admired her greatly and had done his best to win her heart and hand, pleading with her time and again to become his wife. But she had learned to love Harold Ware, and although his only qualifications were an honest heart, a kindly disposition and willing hands, she chose him in preference to her other suitor, wealthy though he was. Her marriage to Harold Ware was a great disappointment to her parents and they not only would not forgive her, but cast her off and refused henceforth to recognize her as their daughter.

As she sat there on this eventful evening, in a sort of

reverie, the thought flashed across her mind that possibly she had made a mistake in marrying Harold Ware, after all. The very entrance of the thought into her mind aroused her from her reverie and almost shrieking "No!" she bounded to the side of her husband, threw her arms around his neck and kissed him upon his forehead. Uttering a faint cry, she jumped back in alarm. He was burning up with a fever!

CHAPTER II.

Harold Ware opened his eyes, but did not move or speak. He seemed in a sort of daze. Mrs. Ware, alarmed almost to the point of distraction, yet knowing that she must not excite her husband, gently laid her hand upon his head and asked:

"Does your head ache, Harold?"

He did not answer for a minute, then said, "Yes, dear, my head aches a little, but it is nothing. I have worried all day because of the closing of the factory, but I will be all right in the morning, after a good night's rest. Guess I had better get to bed at once, as I am tired."

So saying, Mr. Ware tried to arise from the chair in which he had been sitting, and although he tried to conceal the fact, it was apparent to his wife that he was at that minute a very sick man. It took considerable effort for him to arise, and even after he got to his feet he seemed weak and unsteady. Mrs. Ware helped him to their bedroom and he was soon in bed. While he was preparing for bed, Mrs. Ware had slipped into Harry's room, awakened him and told him to dress and get a neighbor boy to go with him to Dr. Whitcomb's office and ask him to come to the house at once. She had not mentioned this to her husband, as she was afraid he would be opposed to sending for the doctor, inasmuch as it meant more expense, and besides they had been unable to pay the doctor anything on his bill for attendance upon Mr. Ware during his recent prolonged illness. She was just a little fearful, too, that the doctor might refuse to come. When she heard Harry returning, however, and was sure the doctor was with him, she told her husband what she had done.

In another minute the door opened and in walked Harry and the doctor, the latter in his great fur coat and fur cap. He greeted Mrs. Ware cordially and after warming himself by the fire, he went in to see his patient. Mrs. Ware watched him intently as he took her husband's temperature, counted his pulse beats and made a thorough examination upon which to base a diagnosis of the case. It seemed as though she could not wait to hear his report—and yet she dreaded to hear it. Having finished his examination and asked the patient a few questions, the doctor returned to the sitting room and prepared some medicine, without saying a word. Mrs. Ware noted that he was very grave, and it seemed to her that the suspense would kill her. Finally she could stand it no longer and asked in a low tone:

"Doctor, do you think Mr. Ware is a very sick man, or is it only a temporary spell brought on by worry over the closing of the factory?"

"Mrs. Ware," replied the doctor, "I am going to tell you the truth. Your husband is indeed a very sick man—very sick. He had not full recovered from his last illness when he returned to his work—against my advice, as you know—and while he might have gotten along all right under favorable conditions, he was just at that point where it did not take much to change things one way or the other, and the announcement of the closing of the factory was too much for him. He is a very sick man. I am afraid it will be necessary for you to be up with him most of the night, as it is necessary that he have his medicine regularly for the next twenty-four hours. We must try to break the fever before this time tomorrow night, or I fear for the outcome. Guess we will have it well in hand by tomorrow night, however. Don't worry, Mrs. Ware, or, at least, do not let him know you are worried. He needs rest of both body and mind. Should he get worse in the night, do not hesitate to call me. Whether I hear from you or not, I will call in the morning and see how he is getting along."

"You are very kind, doctor," said Mrs. Ware. "I hesitated to send for you tonight when I remembered that we had been unable to pay you anything on your account, and

in fact, doctor, I don't know when we can pay you anything. But if only God will spare my husband and make him well and strong again, so that he can work and earn money, you will get every dollar we owe you. In the meantime all we can do is to tell you that we appreciate your kindness and consideration—in fact we appreciate it more than we can tell. You have—”

“Now, Mrs. Ware, don't worry any more over that matter,” interposed the doctor. “Even if I knew you would never be able to pay me a cent, I would come whenever necessary, just the same. Your husband is one of the noblest men I ever knew, and I consider it an honor to serve him. The lives of such men as Harold Ware are too precious to be sacrificed on the altar of greed or gain, and I could never forgive myself if through any neglect on my part his life was sacrificed. You have enough to worry about without even thinking of doctor bills, or their payment, so don't give the matter another thought. Try to be as cheerful as possible when in the presence of your husband, and don't let him know that you think he is seriously ill. He will try to read your mind, but you can throw him off. I must be going now, as I have another call to make yet tonight.”

So saying, the doctor put on his fur coat and cap, shook hands with Mrs. Ware, bade her good night and was gone.

“Mildred,” called Mr. Ware from the bed-room, and his wife was at his side instantly. “Mildred, what did the doctor say?” he asked. “Does he think I am going to have another run of fever, or what does he think?”

“Oh, no,” replied Mrs. Ware, “you are not going to have another run of fever. You have worried yourself sick over the closing of the factory, but you will feel better in the morning. I am going to sit up and give you medicine every two hours, because I want you to get well and strong again as soon as possible. I sent for the doctor because I was afraid if we waited until morning you might get real sick, and you know you are not strong. Don't you think you had better try to get to sleep now, Harold? You need rest as much as anything else.”

“I am a little sleepy, Mildred,” replied Mr. Ware, “but

before I go to sleep I want you to sing a couple of stanzas of that good old song, 'Count Your Blessings.' Somehow, when I am discouraged and down-hearted, that song seems to cheer me up. Will you sing it, Mildred?"

"Yes, Harold, I will sing to you," said Mrs. Ware, and seating herself beside the bed, she sang the first two verses.

"You asked for only a couple of stanzas, Harold. Is that enough, or shall I sing the next two?" asked Mrs. Ware.

"Yes, sing the next two, Mildred," answered Mr. Ware. "I wish there were a dozen stanzas in that song. It cheers me up so much."

Mrs. Ware possessed a rich contralto voice, and as she sang the two last verses of the song she was pleased to see her husband's countenance become almost radiant.

"I feel like shouting 'Hallelujah!'" exclaimed Mr. Ware as his wife finished the song. "Why, say, Mildred, we are not poor after all. Others may have their 'lands and gold,' but what is that compared with 'His wealth untold'? Others may have their servants, but we are promised that the very angels of heaven will attend us and help and comfort us. Others may have fine homes here on earth, but we are promised a home up yonder—oh, hallelujah! I feel—"

"Harold, my dear," interjected Mrs. Ware, "you must not excite yourself even over matters of this kind. It is now time for your medicine again, and then you must go to sleep. The doctor said you needed rest of both body and mind. I am, of course, glad to know that you realize that we are rich—not in the things of this world that afford only temporary enjoyment and fleeting pleasure, but in the things of eternity. But we will talk of these things some other time, Harold. Now, please go to sleep. I am going to sit and read for a while."

Mrs. Ware bent over and kissed her husband, then quietly left the room, and after seeing that Harry had got safely to bed again, she settled herself in an easy chair by the fire and tried to read. She soon discovered that reading was out of the question, however, so she took up her mending. At the end of an hour she slipped quietly into the bed-room and was pleased to find that her husband was

sound asleep and breathing steadily. She had hardly returned to her chair, however, when she heard him moan, and going into the bed-room again she found him wide-awake, but apparently delirious. He was talking, but she could not understand what he was saying. She spoke to him, but he did not answer. She was frightened and getting some camphor and water bathed his head and face, holding a dampened cloth to his nostrils, and after a few minutes he seemed to be resting easier. He continued in this semi-delirious condition throughout most of the night, and as soon as it was daylight she got Harry up and sent him for the doctor. Harold Ware was indeed a very sick man, and she knew it.

The doctor arrived promptly, and it took only a superficial examination to convince him that his patient had grown much worse during the night. He was still semi-delirious, his fever was high and he seemed to be getting weaker. The doctor feared for the outcome, but kept his fears to himself. He prepared some more medicine and gave Mrs. Ware full directions for caring for the patient.

"How is he this morning, doctor?" asked Mrs. Ware.

"I am sorry to say that he is not so well," replied the doctor, "but there is yet hope. He is very weak and must have nourishment of some kind. I would advise that you give him a glass of malted milk every four or five hours. I will see him again soon after noon. In the meantime, see that he gets his medicine regularly. I am going to see Mrs. Beman and ask her to come over for a while, so you can take a rest and a good sleep, Mrs. Ware. If you are not careful you will be down sick, too. I am sure Mrs. Beman will come and stay a part of the day, at least, and you must rest."

Within an hour after the doctor had gone, Mrs. Beman arrived and insisted that Mrs. Ware go to bed at once and take a good sleep.

"No, Mrs. Beman," said Mrs. Ware, "I can not go to bed, but I will lie down in Harry's room and perhaps I can get an hour's sleep. You must promise me, though, that you will call me if Harold asks for me or even if he awakes and is rational. Poor man, he has been delirious most of

the night and talked of everything. I could not make any sense out of what he was saying, but it seems as though he is trying to tell me something. Call me, sure, if he awakes."

Mrs. Ware went to Harry's room and, without disrobing, lay down on the bed. She had not realized how tired she was until Mrs. Beman came to relieve her, the excitement and worry having kept her mind occupied and she was not really aware of her own fatigue.

When Mrs. Beman tip-toed into the room ten minutes later, she found Mrs. Ware sleeping soundly, and as she looked down on the face of the sleeping woman—a face resplendent in its sweetness and purity, in spite of all the suffering and hardship its possessor had been called upon to endure—she murmured:

"Perhaps Paul was right when he told the Hebrews that the Lord chastens those He loves, but I never could understand why God-fearing and God-serving people like Harold and Mildred Ware should be called upon to suffer so much, while so many wicked people are prosperous and healthy and happy. But He knows best, I suppose."

When Harry Ware entered the house an hour later, jingling some silver in his hand, he found Mrs. Beman sitting by the fire. She raised her finger as a warning for him to be quiet, and then got up and quietly closed the doors to the two bed-rooms.

"Do not make any noise, Harry," said she. "Your mamma is sleeping in your room, and she needs all the rest she can get. Where did you get the money, Harry?"

"I just took five dozen eggs down to Banker Smith's house," answered Harry, "and Mrs. Smith paid me thirty-five cents a dozen for them. This is five cents above market price. I've got a dollar and seventy-five cents for mamma when she wakes up. I know it will please her, for we are pretty hard up, Mrs. Beman. I wanted to stop down town and buy papa a dime's worth of fruit, but thought I had better ask mamma first. Wish our hens would lay a few more eggs."

"Listen, Harry," said Mrs. Beman, as she tip-toed to the door of the room in which Mr. Ware lay.

"Mildred," called a faint voice from within, and Mrs.

Beman knew Mr. Ware was awake and was calling for his wife. She aroused Mrs. Ware and the next minute she was at the bedside of her husband.

"Did you call me, Harold?" she asked.

"Yes, Mildred," he replied. "I want to talk to you. Something tells me I am not going to get well. I have no idea what day this is or how long I have lain here, but I know I am very weak, and while I do not want to cause you unnecessary alarm, I must tell you that I don't believe I ever will get well. It seems as if I have made a long journey since I talked to you last—a journey to another world—and even after I waked up it was several minutes before I could realize that I was still on earth and in my own home. I wish I could tell you all I saw and heard. It was beautiful, Mildred, nothing like anything of this earth. It must have been a glimpse of heaven, and if it was, our future home is all that the Good Book promises. I can't tell you all about it—I haven't the words to express myself—but it was grand. It seems as though I am going there soon, to stay, Mildred, and if I do, I will wait and watch for you and Harry. It won't be long until you will join me there, for life is fleeting, and it is only a matter of a few years until everyone who is on this earth today will have passed to the great beyond, there to be judged for the deeds done in the flesh and to be rewarded or condemned according to the way they have lived. I do not fear death in the least, Mildred, and although I dislike to leave you and Harry to the mercies of a cold, unfeeling world, if it is His will that I go, I can simply say, 'Amen Lord,' for, as you know, I have never knowingly rebelled against the will of Him who for forty years has held my life in His hand, and I could not afford to do so now. Perhaps I am mistaken and will get well, after all, but let God's will be done."

Had Mrs. Ware given away to the feelings that surged up within her as her husband talked, she would have burst into tears, but knowing that she must be brave for his sake, she conquered her feelings and bending over her husband until her cheek touched his, she said:

"Harold, dear, you simply had a dream, and it means nothing at all. You are surely going to get well and be

spared to me and Harry for many years yet. Try to get the idea of dying out of your mind, for you know we cannot spare you. Your dream was simply the result of your feverish condition. You will be all right in a day or two. Don't think of death, but of life."

"Perhaps it was just a dream, after all," replied Mr. Ware. "By the way, where is Harry? I want to talk to him, but perhaps I had better wait until after I have had a rest."

"Harry is in the sitting room," replied Mrs. Ware. "I will call him if you wish, but I also think you ought to rest now. It is now about time for your medicine again. A nap of an hour or two will strengthen and refresh you, and when you awake again I will have Harry come in."

CHAPTER III.

It is Thanksgiving day. The factory has been closed three days, and already the idle employes are getting restless and anxious. They are gathered in groups about the town, on the streets, in the grocery stores, and in the saloons. The only topic of conversation is the closing of the factory and the outlook for the winter. Several of the employes who had started out Monday morning to look for work elsewhere had returned with the report that it was useless to spend any time or money looking for work in other near-by towns, as conditions similar to those in Linville existed everywhere. This report had a discouraging effect upon the scores of men who had been thrown out of work, and there was a disposition among some of them to get a little ugly. This disposition was more apparent among those who had been drinking.

Down in front of O'Brien's saloon a crowd of men had congregated and they were cursing and making threats of all kinds against what they termed "unfair capital," "financial pirates," "rich thieves," etc. Finally Jack Dolan, who had something of a reputation among the factory employes as an orator, mounted a box, rapped for silence and announced that he had something to say. Jack was foreman in the foundry department of the factory and was used to being



"Just a minute, men," said Mr. Dolan. "I have an announcement to make that will bring grief to every heart in this little town."—Page 28.

obeyed. He had been drinking heavily during the past two or three days, and drink always loosened his tongue. The crowd became silent and Jack commenced:

"Fellow laborers and friends, I want to say just a word about the present financial crisis that has hit us, as you all know, when we were the least expecting it. We all had every reason to believe that we were going to have a prosperous winter. Crops are good all over the country and everything looked prosperous and encouraging, when all of a sudden, like lightning out of a clear sky, this panic comes onto us, we are thrown out of work without warning, factories are closed and the finances of the country are tied up tighter than a drum. I tell you, fellow laborers, it is not treating us right. Here it is Thanksgiving day, and how many of us will have a decent dinner? Some of us are in luck if we get a piece of bread and butter. But the capitalist—look at him. Think what kind of a dinner he will sit down to. And who earned his dinner for him? Did he earn it himself? No, a thousand times no! We, fellow laborers, we earned it for him by the sweat of our brows! [Applause.] How long are we going to stand these things, fellow laborers? Isn't it about time that we demanded our rights as free American citizens? ["Yes, yes," from a dozen throats.]

"Fellow laborers, I move that we start the ball a-rolling by going to Manager Bascom in a body and demanding that the factory be opened up again tomorrow morning, and if he refuses, then we must take matters in our own hands and force things. Do you understand? Can we sit idly by and see our wives and babies starve in a land as rich as this? I say no!"

At this point a dark-visaged man interrupted the speaker and suggested that a committee of five be appointed to see Mr. Bascom first, and then if necessary, the men could call on him in a body. This was agreeable to Mr. Dolan and he said:

"Fellow laborers, our friend Falkson is right, and as chairman of this meeting I will appoint Mr. Falkson, Jim Tanner, John Ginter and Mont English, with myself, as that committee. I will announce to you right now that there is

going to be something doing when this committee gets busy with Mr. Bascom. He is going to come to time, or there will be trouble. We want you all to be at the town hall to-night at seven o'clock and hear our report. Tell all the boys you see—"

At this juncture Mr. Dolan was again interrupted, this time by a woman with a shawl over her head. She talked to him intently for several minutes, then Mr. Dolan arose on the box, and clearing his throat two or three times, he said:

"Just a minute, men. I have an announcement to make that will bring grief to every heart in this little town."

Mr. Dolan's demeanor had undergone a complete change in the last five minutes. While talking to the men about the closing of the factory he had carried the air of a dictator, a bull dozer, and his voice was coarse and loud. Now he spoke in low, gentle tone, yet distinctly, and his comrades knew that something out of the ordinary had happened.

"Mrs. Beman just informed me that Harold Ware, our old friend and fellow laborer, died about twenty minutes ago, and even now, while I am talking, the undertaker is probably getting the body ready for the casket."

As he talked, Mr. Dolan took off his hat, which he had kept upon his head up to this time, and instinctively every man in the crowd raised his hand and removed his hat, standing with bared and bowed head as Mr. Dolan proceeded:

"Men, we have lost one of the best friends we ever had. He was one of God's noblemen, a man who was ever ready to help a friend in need, even to the dividing of his last dollar, if necessary; a man who was quick to see when one of his friends was downcast or discouraged, and just as quick to extend a helping hand or a word of cheer. He was a man who was interested in the welfare of every one of us, and how often has he spoken to each of us in that kindly voice about the way we were living and asked us to live better lives. While he was bitterly opposed to the saloon, he never condemned a man who drank, but rather pitied him and did his best to get him to quit. If ever a thorough Christian man lived, that man was Harold Ware."

As Mr. Dolan spoke in eulogy of their deceased comrade, every head remained bowed, and more than one man wiped away a tear that trickled down his bearded cheek. Mr. Dolan continued:

"If the world contained more men like Harold Ware, how much better and brighter it would be. No one ever heard him complain, no matter how things were going with him, but he always had a cheery smile and a happy countenance. I never was much for religion, but if it wasn't religion that made Harold Ware different from the rest of us, what was it? And if it was religion, a little of it wouldn't hurt any of us. Harold Ware can never again take you and me by the hand and talk to us as he has done so often, men, but the memory of what he has said to us should linger with us until our dying day. We all loved him as a man and respected him as a Christian, and it seems to me that this Thanksgiving day—and the day of his death—would be a good time for some of us to start to living as he wanted us to live. As far as I am concerned personally, I am going to start this very minute to live a better life. Perhaps I cannot live a Christian life, but I can at least make an effort. I am going to start by cutting out the booze. From this time forward, men, Jack Dolan will be known as a total abstainer, and not only that, but I am going to do all I can to get others to quit drinking. There is not one of us but would have money saved up—plenty of it—if we had not spent half we made in the saloons. You all know it. I have been a drinking man for many, many years, and have spent lots of money for drink that should have gone to my family. Some of you men before me have been doing the same. If we had all the money we have spent in the saloons during the past two or three years we would not need to worry about the closing of the factory for a few weeks. Isn't that so? Tell me."

Nearly every man nodded assent.

"Now I will tell you what I am going to do. I am going to ask every man who will join me in cutting out the booze and trying to live a better life, to come up and shake me by the hand. We will do this in reverence to the memory of Harold Ware. Come along, men."

There was a regular crush around the box upon which Jack Dolan stood as the men crowded around to shake his hand. Someone suggested that he get a paper and have each man sign his name. A sheet of paper was secured and after Mr. Dolan had hastily written a pledge, each man affixed his signature, nearly forty names being secured. After the last man had signed his name, Mr. Dolan continued:

"When I came out here to talk to you, Mr. O'Brien said when I got through I could invite you all into his saloon to take a drink at his expense, and I expected to do it, but instead I will send word to Mr. O'Brien that we all thank him just the same, but cannot accept his invitation. Say, men, I feel better already, and, say, how do you suppose our wives and mothers will feel when they hear the news?"

"Now, there is another matter I want to talk to you about, and then we will adjourn. You all know something of Harold Ware's circumstances—how he lost all his money some six months ago, and how he had a long run of fever, getting back to work only a few days before the factory closed, and so on. Well, Mrs. Beman tells me that he left only a few dollars and they hardly know how they are going to give him a decent burial. I told her not to worry about that, as we would see that he was properly buried, and I am depending on you me to help me make my word good. I know you are all hard up, but there is not one of us but can spare something, and every little helps. I have a suggestion to make. A while ago, before we heard of the death of Harold Ware, I appointed a committee to call on Mr. Bascom and demand that the factory be started up again at once or there would be trouble. I think perhaps we were a little hasty in taking that action, and I now suggest that that matter be laid upon the table for the time being and that the committee be instructed to take up other work instead, which is the raising of a fund to give Harold Ware a burial befitting a man of so noble and lovable a character. I believe it is agreeable to you that this be done, and I now instruct the committee to get busy at once and see that the necessary funds are raised. We ought to have at least two hundred dollars, and I believe we can get it.

If we were all working, we could raise this amount among the employes of the factory in an hour, but under the circumstances we will probably have to get part of it from other sources. Harold Ware must be buried in the finest and best casket that it is possible to secure, and the best carriages, and plenty of them, must be in the funeral procession. We are about to bury one of God's noblemen. Let us make the event befitting the man. I will also instruct the committee to inform Mrs. Ware of the action we have taken, so that she will not worry about the expense of the burial of her husband. We will now adjourn and the committee will get to work. Remember your pledge, men."

Mr. Dolan was about to step down from the box upon which he had been standing, when he heard his name called, and looking up, he saw Mr. O'Brien, the saloon keeper, coming toward him. The two conversed for a minute and Mr. Dolan arose again and said:

"Friends, Mr. O'Brien wants to say a word to you." Then turning to the saloon keeper, he said, "Come up, Mr. O'Brien."

Mr. O'Brien climbed up beside Mr. Dolan, shook hands with him, and then turning to the men, he said:

"Friends, I never did claim to be a public speaker or an orator like our friend Dolan, but I want to say just a word to you. I heard what Mr. Dolan said about 'cutting out the booze' and saw you men as you signed your names to the paper, and also heard Mr. Dolan say he would send me word that you would not accept my invitation to come in and have a drink with me. Now, men, I want you to know that I do not bear any ill will toward any of you because of your action, but really I am glad of it. It will mean a loss of money to me, of course, as most of you men have been good customers of mine, but I hope every one of you will stick to the pledge you have made today. I have taken your money, I will admit, when I knew your families needed it, but if I didn't sell you drink, someone else would, is the way I figured it. But if you are going to quit, I am glad of it and I am not figuring on getting any more of your money. I am in the saloon business to try to make a living, and if I can't do it I will go at something else.

"I never happened to meet Harold Ware personally," continued Mr. O'Brien, "but I have heard much of him and always had the greatest respect for him, because I believe he was sincere in all that he said. Now if you will accept money from a saloon keeper, I would like to start his burial fund with a contribution of ten dollars, and here's the money."

Mr. O'Brien took a roll of bills from his pocket, peeled off a ten-dollar bill and handed it to Mr. Dolan. The latter accepted it, thanked the donor, and then said:

"I would like to have the committee meet at Buckwalter's grocery store at two o'clock today, when we will make our plans for raising the money with which to bury our old friend."

CHAPTER IV.

The news of the death of Harold Ware soon spread over the little town of Linville and caused profound sorrow among all classes of people. Unostentatious though he had always been, of a retiring, modest disposition, his life and character had made a favorable impression upon rich and poor alike, and now that he was dead, many were the stories told of his acts of kindness during the years he had lived in the little town.

It was indeed a sad Thanksgiving day for Mrs. Ware and it seemed to her that her grief was more than she could bear. In spite of all she could do, a feeling of rebellion welled up in her heart at times and it almost seemed as though God had forgotten her entirely. Then as she thought of her husband's resignation and implicit trust even up to the minute of his death, and his words of cheer and encouragement, the bitterness that had been taking possession of her heart and thoughts gave way to a feeling of praise and passion and she wept as only a woman can weep.

Within a hour after her husband's death, messages of sympathy began pouring in from all sides, as well as offers of assistance. Mrs. Beman had taken charge of affairs in the Ware home, by request, and Mrs. Ware and Harry sat undisturbed in Harry's room. Harry tried his best to comfort his mother, and tried to be brave for her sake, but oc-

asionally his feelings got the best of him and placing his arm around his mother's neck he sobbed as though his little heart would break.

As they sat there it seemed as though there was a constant stream of people—neighbors, most of them—coming to or leaving the house. Mrs. Beman met them, thanked them for their interest and kindness, and once in a while she quietly opened the bedroom door and told Mrs. Ware who had called and what messages they had left. Mrs. Ware's heart was too full to meet or talk to anyone, but she told Mrs. Beman that if their pastor, the Rev. Abrams, called, to show him in. It was not long before he arrived and Mrs. Ware was indeed glad to see him. In fact she could think of no one else she cared to see at this time. Her soul was hungering not so much for sympathy and offers of assistance—though she appreciated these expressions and offers more than words could tell—but for something deeper, something that would buoy her up and give her strength and courage to pass through the ordeal that was hers. She knew its only source and welcomed the messenger—her pastor. Rev. Abrams was a middle-aged, kind-hearted, benevolent man, beloved by his parishioners and popular with all classes of people. He spent nearly an hour talking to Mrs. Ware and praying with her, and at the end of that time she seemed more composed and resigned.

Mr. Abrams was about to ask Mrs. Ware concerning the arrangements for the funeral, when there was a tap on the door and Mrs. Beman entered and said:

"Mrs. Ware, there is a gentleman here to see you. It is Mr. Dolan—Jack Dolan. Will you see him?"

"What can he want?" asked Mrs. Ware. "Can't he leave his message with you, Mrs. Beman?"

"He seems very anxious to see you personally," replied Mrs. Beman, "but perhaps I can deliver his message."

The truth of the matter was, Mrs. Beman knew the message Mr. Dolan had to deliver and was anxious to have him deliver it himself. She had said nothing to Mrs. Ware concerning the action taken by the men on the street a few hours before, as it was understood that the committee was to notify her.

"Very well, you may show him in," said Mrs. Ware.

The minister arose to retire, but Mrs. Ware asked him to remain.

In another minute Mrs. Beman re-entered the room, followed by Mr. Dolan, whom she introduced to Mrs. Ware and the Rev. Abrams. It was clearly apparent that Mr. Dolan was somewhat frustrated. After shaking hands with each of them, he said:

"Mrs. Ware, I—I—have a sad and yet a—a pleasant duty to perform. I am chairman of a committee from the employes of the factory who passed resolutions of sympathy and regret today upon the—the death of—of your husband—and our friend. I want to present you with a copy of these resolutions."

Mr. Dolan arose and crossing the room handed Mrs. Ware a folded paper. She started to thank him, but he interrupted her:

"We would have sent these resolutions by messenger, Mrs. Ware, but there is something else that made it necessary for some of us to come and see you personally, and as I was chairman of the committee the boys thought it best for me to come. I said a minute ago that I had a sad and yet pleasant duty to perform. It would be pleasant were it not for the sad circumstances that surround it. Your husband was one of the grandest men I ever knew, Mrs. Ware, and was very popular with the men in the factory. In fact they loved him to a man. We knew something of his financial circumstances, and when we heard of his death today and knew that perhaps you were—were—a little short of ready money, we decided to raise a fund to pay the expenses of—of—to pay the funeral expenses."

Mrs. Ware had been quietly weeping as she heard her dead husband eulogized by Mr. Dolan, and when he announced the raising of the burial fund she broke down completely, covered her face with her handkerchief, and her whole body was convulsed with sobs.

For the first time in years, Jack Dolan felt hot tears streaming from his eyes, and his great heart—hardened by years of sinful living—fairly melted.

Rev. Abrams, too, although used to pathetic scenes,

wiped away the tears that trickled down his cheek.

As soon as Mr. Dolan could compose himself, he tried to proceed, but in spite of all he could do, a big, hard lump kept rising in his throat.

"Our committee will see that all the expenses are paid, Mrs. Ware," he said, "and we don't want you to worry a bit over this matter. Everything is to be of the best. You are to go ahead in making your arrangements just as though you had plenty of money. There is not a man of us but would sell the coat off his back, if necessary, to raise the money, but that will not be necessary. We already have quite a sum pledged. The men will attend the—the—funeral in a body and will provide plenty of carriages."

"You are certainly very kind, Mr. Dolan," said Mrs. Ware, who had become composed, "and I want you to thank the men for me for their kindness. It lifts a big load from my heart, I assure you, for really I did not know what I was going to do. While I can never repay you and the other men for your kindness, I am going to ask God to reward you in some way, and I know He will do it."

"Indeed He will," said the minister, "and I am going to join Mrs. Ware in asking Him to do so. Mr. Dolan, if agreeable to you, we will ask God right now to bless every man who has had or will have a hand in this noble work. Will you join us?"

"Sure," said Mr. Dolan, and for the first time in his life he knelt down beside his chair, while the minister prayed as he had never prayed before.

CHAPTER V.

"I understand old man Simpkins is going to levy on Mrs. Ware's household goods today to satisfy a mortgage he holds on the stuff. It seems to me he is in considerable of a hurry. If he had any regard whatever for Mrs. Ware's feelings or even common decency, I should think he would wait a little while, at least. It's pretty tough for a woman to bury her husband one day and lose all her household goods the next."

The speaker was Tom Ewing, one of the idle factory

employees. He was talking to a group of men in Buckwalter's grocery store.

It was Monday forenoon. The earthly remains of Harold Ware had been laid to rest in the quiet little cemetery at the edge of the town the day before. The funeral services were held in the church of which he had been an active member for years, and although it was the largest church in the town, not more than half the people who wished to do so could get inside the doors. Rich and poor alike seemed anxious to pay homage to the memory of the deceased. It was the most impressive funeral service ever held in the town, and the funeral cortege was by far the longest ever seen in the community.

The factory employes marched to the church in a body and then marched four abreast in the funeral procession to the cemetery, immediately behind the mourners' carriage.

The little group of men in Buckwalter's grocery store had been discussing the death of Harold Ware and his burial the day before, when Tom Ewing made the statement at the beginning of this chapter.

"Who was telling you that?" asked one of the group.

"John Barlow, the constable, told me this morning," replied Ewing. "He said old Simpkins was in to see Justice Dooley last Saturday, even before Harold Ware was buried, and wanted attachment papers made out, so he could get busy bright and early this morning before it got noised about; but Dooley staved him off and told him to come around this morning. Barlow said he'd rather take a good thrashing than serve the papers, but supposed he'd have to do it. He's the only constable in town now."

"It's a pity someone wouldn't knock old Simpkins' bloomin' head off before he gets a chance to take the stuff," exclaimed "Red" Griffin. "For half a cent I'd do it myself. I hate the old guy, anyway. He's got more money than he knows what to do with and never was known to spend a cent. One of the boys went to him for a donation for Ware's funeral and got turned down without a penny. Said he couldn't afford to give anything—times are too hard. The tight-fisted old miser ought to lose every cent he's got and go hungry. Then he'd know something about hard

times. Ain't there any way we can keep him from taking that stuff away from Mrs. Ware? Do you know, Ewing?"

"No," replied Ewing, "he can take it if he wants to, and no one can prevent him. It seems that when he loaned Harold Ware the hundred dollars he took a mortgage on Ware's household goods and had him sign a peculiar kind of note. It is printed right on the note, in very small type, that if the holder of the note thinks at any time that the security isn't good for any reason, he can demand immediate payment, and if it isn't paid, he can take the stuff and sell it. Of course Simpkins considered the security good and his loan safe as long as Ware was living and able to earn money, but now that he is dead, he thinks there is not much prospect of getting his money, so he is going to foreclose. The note is not really due for several months yet. I wish Jack Dolan was here, but he is out of town today."

"Well, say, fellows," said "Red" Griffin, "if we can't stop the old guy in any legal way, let's try a good, big bluff on him, and if necessary let someone give him a good, swift punch in the jaw. Let's get the fellows together and be ready when he tries to serve the papers. That woman is helpless and it's a shame to let this thing go. Let's everyone get busy and get the boys together. Tell them to meet at Brisbane's feed stable in an hour, or sooner if possible. There's no time to lose. And say, 'Curley,' you go down and hang around Justice Dooley's office and let us know what is doing."

The group separated and each one started out to hunt up as many of the "fellows" as possible. Inside of thirty minutes they began to collect at Brisbane's stable and when the hour was up nearly fifty men were gathered together. Not all of them understood the situation, and in fact some of them had no idea what they were there for, but as they were all idle on account of the closing of the factory, they were ready for anything that would break the monotony. Tom Ewing had just finished explaining matters to them, and "Red" Griffin was just about to start on one of his characteristic "speeches," when "Curley" Smith rushed in with the announcement that Simpkins and the constable had just started for the Ware home.

It had been arranged that the men should separate on leaving the stable and take as many different routes in getting to the Ware home as possible, so it would look as though they just "happened" to meet there. This was "Red" Griffin's suggestion, and he explained to the men that if it was known that they had met and made their plans beforehand, Simpkins might have them all arrested for "plotting against the government."

Inside of twenty minutes after the men left the barn, they were all gathered around the Ware home, some in the yard and others lined up along the fence in front of the house. But no constable was in sight, and neither was Simpkins anywhere around. The men had calculated that Simpkins and the constable would come direct to the Ware home, and they expected to find them there when they reached the place. Instead, however, the two men had gone looking for an express wagon in which to haul the goods away after seizing them, and it was some minutes before they arrived. They were surprised to find nearly half a hundred men awaiting them, besides nearly as many women and children who had gathered through curiosity.

The express wagon was driven up in front of the house and Simpkins and the constable alighted, while the driver stayed on his seat awaiting orders.

Both Simpkins and the constable at once saw that there was trouble ahead, and the old man kept as close to the officer as possible. He could not imagine how the word had got out that he was going to seize the Ware household goods on foreclosure proceedings and was surprised to find the crowd awaiting him. He knew full well that Harold Ware had been one of the most popular men in Linville and that everybody was his friend, and consequently a friend of his widow and son, and he also knew that for some reason he was most unpopular and hardly had a true friend on earth. He knew, too, that the factory employes who had been thrown out of work were feeling a little ugly and were especially bitter toward men like himself who had plenty of money. On account of this condition of things, he had hoped to keep his purpose from reaching the ears of anyone and had planned on seizing the goods before any-

one knew what was being done. But in spite of all his planning and secrecy, the matter had leaked out and here was a crowd of angry men seemingly bent on thwarting his plans.

Barlow, the constable, knew why the men were congregated, and while he secretly wished that something might happen to prevent the serving of the papers, he was an officer who had never been known to shirk his duty and he did not intend to do so now.

The first intimation that Mrs. Ware had that her household goods were to be taken from her was when the men began to gather around her home. As soon as Tom Ewing reached the place he went into the house and told her what Constable Barlow had told him in the morning. He assured her, however, that the men would prevent the seizure of the goods, if possible.

Mrs. Ware almost swooned when she heard the news, and had not Harry placed his arm around her she would have fallen over. She sank into a chair and everything seemed black before her. Harry got her a drink of cold water and this revived her somewhat. As soon as she regained her composure she explained the matter to Harry and they at once set about emptying bureau drawers and getting things ready to be moved out. She knew Simpkins to be a most hard-hearted, miserly old fellow who would stop at nothing, and she knew Constable Barlow's well-earned reputation as an officer who never shirked his duty, no matter how disagreeable it might be. In her own mind there was no hope whatever of saving her household goods, and the only thing to do was to give them up. Harry rolled a couple of large boxes into the house, and into these they dumped the contents of bureau and dresser drawers.

In the excitement of the moment she had almost forgotten that she was a widow—that the husband whom she had loved with all her heart was dead—but the fact was brought to her mind with double force when she drew one of the drawers from the dresser and started to empty it into one of the boxes. It was Harold's drawer, in which he had kept his shirts, his collars, cuffs, neckties and underwear, besides little trinkets and keepsakes, many of which she had given him.

Instead of emptying it, she set it down on top of the box, sank into a chair and burst into tears. Covering her face with her hands, she rocked back and forth and sobbed so violently that it frightened Harry. He went to her side and tried to comfort her.

At this minute Mrs. Beman came in. She had just heard the news and had come over at once. She took in the situation at a glance and knew that the drawer containing Harold's effects was the cause of Mrs. Ware's grief. Gently putting her arm around her, she led her into another room and sitting down with her, she said:

"It may not be necessary to empty any more drawers, Mildred, and even if it is, it can be done quickly. Surely the officer would not be so cruel as to rush matters."

Outside the house another drama was being enacted. As Simpkins and the officer approached the gate, Tom Ewing jumped upon a box and said:

"Just a minute, gentlemen. We know your purpose in coming here today. How, when and where we found out what you were going to do does not matter. We are not here to do any violence, although it almost seems as though we would be justified in resorting to any measures to prevent the execution of the papers you have in your possession and the seizure of the household goods of Mrs. Ware to satisfy a mortgage which you, Mr. Simpkins, hold as security for a loan made to our dead friend, Harold Ware. Legally you have a right, I suppose, to take these goods, but, Mr. Simpkins, don't you think you are rushing matters a little? Do you realize that only yesterday Mrs. Ware buried her husband and that even at the best her burden of grief is as great as she can bear? Stop a moment, Mr. Simpkins, and consider what it will mean to Mrs. Ware to have her household goods taken from her at this time. The poor woman has no home except this one, and why not wait a reasonable time, at least, before forcing her to give up the only home she has? Do you realize what you are about to do, Mr. Simpkins?"

There was a moment's silence, and then Mr. Simpkins said in his peculiar, whining voice:

"Yes, I realize what I am about to do, and I don't know

why you or anybody else should interfere with an honest man who is simply trying to get that which belongs to him. I am not a highway robber nor a thief, but an honest man engaged in an honest business—that of lending money. I loaned this man Ware money when he needed it bad—one hundred dollars—and as security took a mortgage on his household goods, with the understanding that I could foreclose the mortgage at any time if I felt that the security for any reason or by any event was placed in jeopardy. I consider that the death of the signer of the note, and the mortgagor, places the security in jeopardy, and I am doing what I have a perfect right to do, under the law, in seizing the property. If you fellows are so mightily interested in the widow, why don't some of you pay the note and have the mortgage released? I don't care where my money comes from, but I want it and want it now, and I'm going to get it. Do your duty, officer."

As he finished speaking, Simpkins took the constable by the arm and started to move toward the house. He had taken only one step, however, when he was confronted by "Red" Griffin. "Red," as he was familiarly known, was over six feet tall, of stocky build, with red hair and eyes that fairly flashed fire when he was mad. And he was mad now.

"Look here, you old skinflint," he commenced, "while, as my friend Ewing said, we are not here to do violence, and we don't want any trouble if we can help it, we are not going to stand here like a lot of mummies and see you rob a poor widow and set her out on the street without a home or a piece of furniture. You thought because Tom Ewing talked kind o' nice to you and tried to reason with you, that you had us scared, but you are badly fooled. I want to say to you right here and now that you are not going to touch a piece of that furniture, and while I have respect for the law and am a law-abiding citizen, I warn you that if either you or Mr. Barlow attempt to move one piece of Mrs. Ware's furniture, you will have 'Red' Griffin to deal with, and what he will do to you will be a plenty. You miserly old coot, it's a pity they didn't bury you yesterday instead of Harold Ware. You ask why we don't pay you your money if we are so interested in the widow. We'd do

it in a minute if we had it, but you know we are all out of work and most of us are broke flat. I contributed the last 50-cent piece I had in the world to the fund to pay Harold Ware's funeral expenses, and some of the other boys did the same. And how much did you contribute? Not a cent, you tight-fisted old miser, and now you want to rob his widow of what little she has left. But you won't do it to-day, old man, and you had better not try it."

"I have a suggestion to make," said Tom Ewing. "Mr. Simpkins asked why we do not pay the Ware note and have the mortgage released. Now why can't we do this: Supposing fifty of us pledge two dollars each, and enough more to cover the interest, to be paid out of our first week's wages after the factory opens up again, each of us giving an order on Mr. Bascom for the amount we pledge. What do you think of that, Mr. Simpkins?"

"That don't suit me at all," replied Mr. Simpkins. "As I told you a few minutes ago, my money is due now—right now—and must be paid right now. I don't propose to submit to the dictation of a lot of paupers, and unless you can produce the money at once, we will go ahead and seize the furniture."

Constable Barlow had said nothing up to this time, but was simply awaiting developments. Now, however, he spoke up.

"Men," he said, "there doesn't seem to be any use arguing this matter any longer. I will admit that I had hoped things could be fixed up so it would not be necessary for me to serve these papers, but that seems out of the question. I think the proposition Mr. Ewing made Mr. Simpkins a very good one, and I hoped Mr. Simpkins would accept it, but was disappointed. There doesn't seem to be any way to fix things up, so that there is only one thing left to do. Before I undertake the discharge of my duty I want to say a word. You all know me; most of you have known me for years. Not a man in this crowd can truthfully say that he ever knew John Barlow to shirk his duty, and I have been an officer for a good many years. Neither can any man say I am a coward, for I am not. Threats have been made here today of what would happen if I attempted to perform my

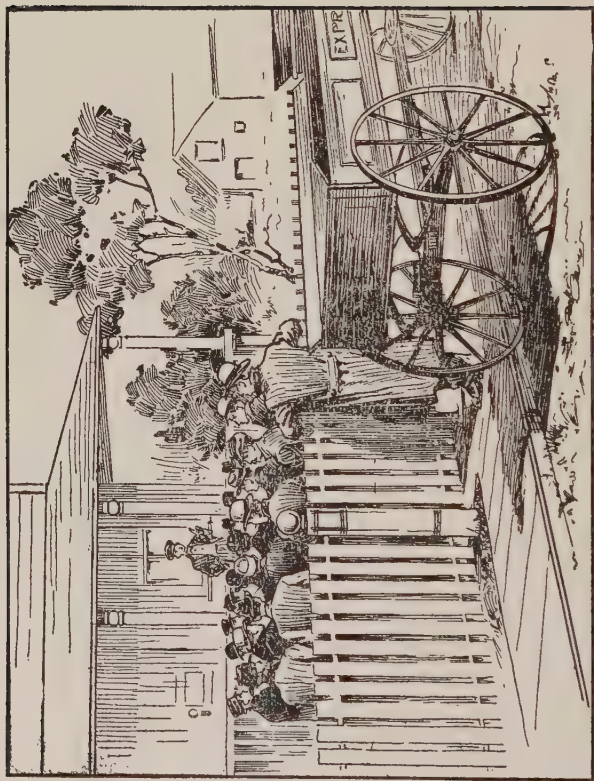
duty. I will say to you all, and to 'Red' Griffin in particular, that you had better be a little careful in what you do, or attempt to do, for when once I start to perform my duty, no man or crowd of men on earth can stop me. I will give you fair warning and would advise you to heed it."

While Constable Barlow was speaking, a gleam of satisfaction and triumph shone in the eye of Mr. Simpkins, and when the constable had finished he slapped him gently on the back and murmured:

"You are a brave officer, and I always knew it."

A wave of expectancy swept over the crowd when the constable had finished speaking. No one knew exactly what might happen within the next few minutes and everyone was on the *qui vive*. The next minute a voice from the direction of the house attracted the attention of the crowd, and little Harry Ware was seen standing on a box on the porch trying to make himself heard. In an instant the crowd was quiet, as all were anxious to hear what he had to say.

"Men," he said, "I have been busy in the house getting things ready for the constable and did not know what was going on out here. I am sorry there has been any trouble, as there was no need of it at all. When mamma and I heard a little while ago that Mr. Simpkins was going to take our furniture away from us, it seemed at first as though we must prevent it, if possible, as it represents everything we have in the world. But when mamma explained to me that Mr. Simpkins had a mortgage on it and had a perfect to take it, that settled the whole matter and we commenced to get it ready to be moved out. Just before papa died he called me to the bedside and taking my hand in his he asked me to promise him three things: First, that I would take good care of mamma and would take his place as far as I was able as her support and protector; second, that no matter what happened I would be honorable and upright in all my dealings with my fellow men; and, third, that I would avoid bad companions and never touch liquor in any form. He told me to take the seventh verse of the thirteenth chapter of Romans as my guide in life, which says: 'Render, therefore, to all their dues; tribute to whom trib-



"Harry Ware was seen standing on a box on the porch
trying to make himself heard."

ute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.' I promised him, men, and with God's help I am going to keep my promise. While it does not seem right for Mr. Simpkins to take our furniture, and I don't know what in the world we will do, I would be breaking the promise I made papa if I tried to keep him from taking what really belongs to him. I am only a boy and from this time on will be mamma's only support. I lay awake most of the night trying to think of some way of earning money. There is not much a boy can do, especially in a small town. Mamma and I talked matters over this morning and decided we could get along for a while on the money we get from selling eggs. We have a nice lot of White Leghorn chickens and get quite a lot of eggs. Banker Smith takes five dozen a week at five cents a dozen above market price, and I guess we could find customers for all the eggs our hens lay. But now if we are going to lose our furniture, we will have to sell the chickens and then I don't know what we can do. Even if we could sell the chickens for enough to buy a little furniture, we wouldn't be any better off, for then we wouldn't have any eggs to sell. It seems as though—"

"Just a minute, my little man," broke in Mr. Simpkins, who had been studiously reading what appeared to be a legal document in his hand. "According to the conditions of the mortgage, the chickens are also included. It says 'all other goods and chattels,' and I guess that takes in the chickens."

"But, Mr. Simpkins," replied Harry, "the chickens belong to me. Papa gave them to me."

There was a noticeable tremor in Harry's voice as he spoke.

"That makes no difference," said Mr. Simpkins; "you are a minor and do not legally own anything. If we can't get enough out of the furniture to clear the mortgage, we will take the chickens. And I want every egg your hens lay today and from this time on, too. They're mine. If Banker Smith wants any more eggs, let him come to me."

During the last two or three minutes Constable Barlow had been busily writing something on a slip of paper, and while Mr. Simpkins was talking, he handed the slip to a

young man, who took it and started up the street on a run. No one except the constable knew what it meant.

"All right, Mr. Simpkins," replied Harry, the tears streaming down his cheeks. "You may have them if they are yours. But I want to ask a favor of you. Three of the McConnell children have been sick with fever and we have been sending them a few eggs every day for nothing. They have no money to buy eggs with and they must have them. Will you see that they get three or four eggs a day until they get well?"

"Let the McConnells buy their eggs. It isn't my fault that they haven't any money," replied Mr. Simpkins. "Why don't they take care of their money, like I do?"

Without saying another word, Harry jumped down from the box and went into the house.

"Red" Griffin and a few others had been talking intently for several minutes, and all seemed somewhat excited. The constable had his eye on them and when "Red" moved over toward Mr. Simpkins, the officer, fearing trouble, stepped forward and facing "Red," ordered him to stand back. "Red" complied, with an oath.

"There is no use arguing this matter any longer, and I wish you would do your duty at once, Mr. Constable," said Mr. Simpkins, who was getting a little nervous. He took the constable by the arm, but at this moment the young man who had been sent on the errand some minutes before, rushed up, out of breath, and handed the constable a folded paper. The officer opened it, scanned it with his eye, and then drawing a package of legal documents from his pocket, he handed them to Simpkins and said:

"Here are your papers, Mr. Simpkins. If they are served today you will have to serve them yourself. I am no longer a constable. Here is Justice Dooley's acceptance of my resignation as constable which I sent him a few minutes ago."

A cheer went up from the crowd of men when they realized that they had won the day, and a score or more rushed forward to shake Constable Barlow's hand. Mr. Simpkins was so astounded at the sudden turn in affairs that for a moment he was speechless. Then he blurted out:

"Well, what the dickens does this mean, Barlow? Are

you going to admit that after all you have said about being a brave officer, you are in reality a coward, and that you will let a few hoodlums bluff you out? Are you going back on an old friend at a time like this? Don't you know that your reputation for bravery and fearlessness will be ruined and you will be the laughing stock of the whole town? What the dickens do you mean?"

"I mean just this, Mr. Simpkins," replied Barlow. "There is a big difference between fearlessness and heartlessness, and I want you to distinctly understand that cowardice or fear had nothing to do with my action in this matter. As you know, I have been an officer for a good many years, and any man or woman in Linville will tell you that I have been fearless in the discharge of my duties at all times. No one has ever had occasion to accuse me of being cowardly and I have never flinched, although at times I have been in some pretty tight places. I have been shot at several times and today I carry a scar on my right arm made by a bullet fired from a gun in the hands of a desperate Italian several years ago. You remember the circumstances, and you know that even with my right arm crippled and paining me dreadfully, I went ahead and performed my duty, landing the Italian in the city jail and afterwards sending him to the penitentiary. You also know that I conquered the mob of Italians that were banded together with the sworn purpose of killing or maiming me to avenge the imprisonment of one of their number, and that I drove the whole bunch out of town. Without boasting, Mr. Simpkins, I can say that I fear no man on earth, nor no set of men, and I defy—"

"Wait just a minute, Mr. Barlow," interrupted Simpkins. "I know all about what you have done and the record you have made as an officer, and I had always thought your record for fearlessness was well earned, but what I want to know now is why you should become scared at this time and not only refuse to serve the papers given you by Justice Dooley, but actually resign your office as constable, as you say you have done?"

"I can tell you, Mr. Simpkins, and I am not ashamed of it, either," replied Barlow. "There seems to be a general impression that an officer of the law must necessarily be

hard-hearted and without even a touch of sympathy in his nature; that the performance of his duty year after year kills all the sympathy, brotherly love—and sentimentalism, if you wish to term it such—that he ever possessed. Such is not a fact—not with me, at least, and I would today rather be counted a coward than to have it said that I lacked those attributes that make real men—sympathy, love, charity, and so on. They are something that you apparently know nothing about, Mr. Simpkins.

“Now as to why I refused to serve your papers and resigned my office. Nothing that was said here by any of these men had anything to do with it whatever. It was little Harry Ware and your threat to even take his chickens, and your demand that the eggs gathered today be turned over to you. It was the most inhuman, heartless piece of business I ever heard of, and I decided then and there that I would not be a party to any such outrageous transaction. I have a little boy about Harry’s age, Mr. Simpkins, and when I saw that manly little fellow standing there on the porch and heard his little speech in which he showed himself to be a boy of honor, and honesty, I was as proud of him as though he was my own son. A boy with the principles of Harry Ware should be encouraged, not discouraged, and as I told you before, if the papers are served and the furniture taken away from Harry Ware and his mother, someone else will do it; I won’t.”

As Mr. Barlow finished speaking, a half hundred hats were thrown into the air and a shout went up that was heard all over the little town.

Mr. Simpkins saw that he had been defeated in his purpose, and started away, after making the threat that he would have the papers served even if he had to have a deputy sheriff come over from the county seat to serve them. He had started down the street when the driver of the wagon stopped him and demanded pay for two hours’ service of himself and team, amounting to two dollars.

“Pay you two dollars!” exclaimed Simpkins. “What would I pay you two dollars for? What have you done? Nothing except stand around and watch me abused. Go to the dickens for your two dollars. I’ll never pay it.”

"Now, see here, Simpkins," said the driver, "you will pay me two dollars or I will sue you before sundown and you will have the costs of the suit to pay in addition to the two dollars. You had better dig up, and do it quick."

The crowd of men had by this time gathered around Simpkins and the driver, and someone shouted, "Take it out of his hide." Other threatening remarks were made and it was evident that Simpkins was becoming nervous. He did not have the constable at his back now, and he knew that the men were feeling ugly toward him and might resort to violence.

"Couldn't you cut the price a little, seein' as how you didn't do anything except drive your empty wagon up here?" asked Simpkins.

"No," replied the driver; "our regular price is one dollar an hour for man and team, and that's what you're going to pay. It isn't my fault that nothing was done. Come now, dig up, and save further trouble."

"All right, I'll pay it," said Simpkins, "but you'll never get any more of my hauling to do," and handing the driver two silver dollars, he started down the street, with the jeers of the crowd ringing in his ears.

Within the next few minutes the crowd had dispersed, and Tom Ewing, accompanied by Mr. Barlow, the ex-constable, went into the house to explain matters to Mrs. Ware and Harry. They told Mrs. Ware that Mr. Simpkins could do nothing for several days, at least, and that in the meantime an effort would be made to have the matter fixed up satisfactorily to all concerned. As the men were leaving, Mr. Barlow took Harry by the hand and said:

"My boy, always heed the advice given you by your father and everything will come out all right. Be good to your mother, be honorable in your dealings with your fellow men, let liquor alone, and all will be well. Should you ever need a friend, don't hesitate to call on me. I will consider it a privilege to assist you in any way that I can, and the rest of the boys feel just as I do. It so happens that money is scarce with all of us at this time, or we would have paid Simpkins his money today. Good bye. I hope to see you again, but under different circumstances."

CHAPTER VI.

"Here's a letter for you, mamma," said Harry Ware, who had just come home from down town one afternoon about a week after the experience with Mr. Simpkins and the constable. "Guess it's from your folks back east," he said, as he handed the letter to his mother. Harry had never been taught to refer to Mrs. Ware's parents as grandfather and grandmother or to her sisters as his aunts. It was always "your folks back east."

"And say, before I forget it, mamma, I met Banker Smith and he wanted to know if you would be at home this evening. He said he wanted to call and see you on a business matter. I told him to come ahead, as I was sure you would be at home. So I guess we can expect him."

"I wonder what he can want?" said Mrs. Ware, as she carefully opened the letter Harry had handed her, which, as the postmark showed, was from "her folks back east."

Harry watched her as she read it and surmised by the expression on her face that it was not the kind of a letter she had hoped for. He knew something of how she had displeased her parents when she married Harold Ware—his father—against their wishes, and how they had refused to recognize her as their daughter, and in his boyish mind he had resolved to avenge the wrong he considered they had done his mother, when he was older and had the opportunity.

Mrs. Ware finished reading the letter and then sat for some minutes looking out of the window, without saying a word. Finally Harry asked:

"Is it from your folks, mamma?"

"Yes, Harry, it is from my older sister Harriet—your Aunt Harriet," replied Mrs. Ware. "I sent them a paper containing a notice of your papa's death and also wrote mamma, but she is not well, and so Harriet answered the letter."

Harry had crossed the room and was standing beside his mother, with his hand laid lovingly on her shoulder. Presently Mrs. Ware turned in her chair and placing her arm around Harry she drew him toward her, kissed him and said:



"Harry, my boy, I have never told you much
about my folks—your grandfather, grand-
mother and aunts—back in my old
home in New England."

"Harry, my boy, I have never told you much about my folks—your grandfather, grandmother and aunts—back in my old home in New England. You already know that they were opposed to my marriage to your papa, but you do not know why, perhaps. In the first place, your papa was poor, and as my folks were rich and very proud, they thought I had disgraced them when I married a poor man, honest and honorable though he was. In the second place, another young man—young at that time—wanted to marry me, and as he was wealthy and the son of wealthy parents, they were anxious for me to marry him. He was a nice young fellow, an attorney at law, with good prospects, and perhaps I would have married him if I had not met your papa and learned to love him. They warned me that if I married Harold Ware—your papa—they would disown me, but in spite of their threat we were married and I have never crossed the threshold of the old home since, nor have I ever seen any of them. In fact they have not even written to me. Their treatment has been a terrible burden to me, but I have suffered in silence, and in fact have never regretted having married your father.

"After your papa died," continued Mrs. Ware, "I sent them a copy of the paper containing the notice of his death, and also wrote to mamma and asked for a little financial assistance. It was the first time I had ever asked for any help from them, but I did not know who else to go to, and I thought perhaps at this time they would feel a little differently. But I guess it was a mistake. This letter is from sister Harriet in reply to my letter. It is not at all the kind of a letter I had hoped for—in fact I had hoped that mamma would answer my letter herself, and even if she refused me financial assistance, she would at least tell me that she had forgiven me for disobeying her wishes fifteen years ago. For some reason they did not let mamma see my letter at all. I am sure that if she had seen it she would have written me a nice letter in reply, but instead I got this letter from sister Harriet. You may read it, Harry, while I am getting a bite of supper on the table."

Mrs. Ware handed the letter to Harry, and while she was getting supper he read:

Mrs. Harold Ware,
Linville, Ill.

Dear Madam:

Your letter of Dec. 2, addressed to mamma, was duly received. As soon as we saw the post-mark on the letter we knew who it was from and also surmised that it was a begging letter, as we knew that sooner or later you would be asking for help. But you came to the wrong place. We have nothing for you—not even old clothes. We have enough paupers in our own town to help take care of without helping those miles away. Why don't you write to your husband's folks? They might help you were it not for the fact that they are as poverty stricken as you seem to be yourself. Well, you chose to cast your lot among paupers and you have no one but yourself to blame for your present condition. If you had listened to reason, you might now have everything that your heart could desire; but no, you would marry that pauper, Harold Ware, and now you must suffer the consequences of your own folly.

It may please you to know that Chester Burbank has become famous in the legal world and has amassed a fortune of his own. He was back here on a visit a short time ago and from what he told me I imagine he is glad he did not marry you. I don't think he really cared much for you, anyway. It was simply a foolish fancy of a boyish mind, and he soon got over it.

We did not let mamma see your letter at all. I showed it to papa and he said not to let her see it, as she is very nervous and has enough to worry about without being bothered with your troubles. Papa said to tell you we could do nothing for you and that you needn't write again. HARRIET.

P. S.—I see by the paper you sent us that you have a son. Suppose he will grow up to be a worthless pauper just like his father.

Harry's blood fairly boiled by the time he had finished reading the letter, and fearing that he might say something that would hurt his mother's feelings, he slipped out of the house and went about his evening chores, feeding the chickens, gathering the eggs, getting in the wood, etc.—anything to keep him busy until he could get cooled down

a little. In spite of all he could do, the hot tears kept springing to his eyes and rolling down his cheeks, and a spirit of revenge took possession of him. He had never seen the author of the letter and was glad that he had never been taught to allude to her as "Aunt Harriet." He fairly hated her and it seemed as though he could not wait until the time should come when he would have an opportunity to get revenge. He cared very little about her allusion to himself, but he knew that she had cut his mother's heart to the quick and it was her he was thinking of.

Presently his mother called him for supper, and going into the house, he washed and sat down to the table without saying a word. Mrs. Ware was the first to speak:

"Do you have any idea what Banker Smith wants to see me about?" she asked.

"No," replied Harry; "he did not say. He simply said it was a business matter. I haven't the least idea what it can be."

Mother and son sat in silence during the balance of the meal, each one of them thinking of the letter that had been received that afternoon. Harry noticed his mother brush away an occasional tear, and his little heart fairly ached as he thought of the mental anguish she was suffering and which she was trying so hard to conceal. It was all he could do to keep from expressing himself concerning the author of the letter, but knowing that it would only make matters worse, he kept still.

Supper over, Harry helped his mother clear the table and wash the dishes, then while she was putting on another dress he went out to finish his chores.

It was half-past seven when Banker Smith arrived, and after removing his overcoat and hat, and warming himself by the fire, he sat down in the chair Harry had proffered him.

Banker Smith was ordinarily a man of few words and in his business dealings was inclined to be a little gruff at times. There were those in Linville who regarded him as actually crabbed and who hesitated to approach him on matters of any kind. Those who knew him best, however, knew that he was one of the most generous-hearted, kind

and benevolent men that ever lived. Mrs. Ware had only met him a time or two, and then in a business way, and had had very little chance to form an opinion of him.

After getting comfortably seated in his chair and adjusting his spectacles, he said:

"Mrs. Ware, I have a little good news for you. I just heard a couple of days ago that Mr. Simpkins was trying to make trouble for you on account of the mortgage he held on your furniture, and I also heard of the offer the factory employes made to pledge two dollars apiece, or more if necessary, in payment of the note secured by the mortgage, to be paid out of their first week's wages after the reopening of the factory. I saw Mr. Simpkins and urged him to accept this settlement, but he refused to do so. He is a little peculiar, you know. When I saw there was no use in trying to do anything with Mr. Simpkins, I told the men I would loan them the money, without interest, and they could pay it whenever convenient. I gave the money to Tom Ewing today and he went to Simpkins and settled the matter up, bringing the note and mortgage to me. I have them here."

Mr. Smith took the papers from his pocket, handed them to Mrs. Ware, and continued:

"Those two pieces of paper have made quite a bit of trouble, I understand, and I would advise you to burn them up and have an end to it. I don't doubt but that you will rest easier tonight knowing that you are out of the clutches of that man Simpkins."

"This certainly comes as a happy surprise, Mr. Smith," said Mrs. Ware, "and I certainly feel grateful to you and the factory employes who have stood by me so nobly. I have been worried almost to the point of distraction the past few days, not knowing whether I would have a bed of my own to sleep in when night came or not. But, thanks to the kindness of you and other friends, I will get a good night's rest tonight. By the way, Mr. Smith, I want to thank you for being so liberal with Harry, paying him five cents a dozen above market price for his eggs. It is very kind of you, I am sure."

"Oh, don't mention that, Mrs. Ware," replied Mr.

Smith. "The gratitude should be expressed by the other side. I surely feel that I am favored in being supplied with such nice, fresh eggs, and it seems to me that I should pay a higher premium on them. They are surely delicious. I do enjoy a couple of nice fresh, soft-boiled eggs for breakfast, but until we began getting eggs from Harry we did not dare to chance them, as there is no telling what the shells of the ordinary store eggs contain. By the way, I should think Harry could build up quite a business in supplying fresh eggs to private customers, that is, if he had enough hens to supply them. I believe there are at least fifty families in this town that would jump at the chance of getting fresh eggs at five cents premium over current market price. How about it Harry?"

"The trouble is, I haven't enough hens," replied Harry. "But I guess I can supply a couple more customers besides you, as the hens are beginning to shell out the eggs now. I got over two dozen today. I have a lot of young cockerels, and if I could sell them and buy pullets I would be all right. It costs quite a bit to feed the cockerels and they take up quite a lot of room in the chicken house. I could put a little advertisement in one of the poultry papers and sell most of them, I suppose, but the poultry papers are all out for this month, and I will have to wait a month before I can get the advertisement out. I would like to sell them right away."

"Well, say, Harry," said Mr. Smith, "why not put an advertisement in one of the Chicago daily papers? They have a column of poultry and dog advertisements, and perhaps you could sell at least a part of your roosters through one of these small advertisements."

"I never thought of that," said Harry, "and am glad you spoke of it. I will get an advertisement in right away."

"That's right, my boy, do it now," said Mr. Smith, as he arose to go.

He had got his overcoat on and was about to depart when he wheeled around and said:

"By the way, Mrs. Ware, have you heard that a new club has been organized in town to be known as 'The Harold Ware Club'?"

"Why, no, I had not heard of it," said Mrs. Ware. "What is its object?"

"Well, I must tell you about it," said Mr. Smith, unbuttoning his overcoat. "You know on the day of your husband's death a crowd of men were gathered down in front of O'Brien's saloon and were about to send a committee to Mr. Bascom to demand that the factory be reopened at once, and when they heard of your husband's death they withdrew the demand and instructed the committee, instead, to raise a fund to defray your husband's funeral expenses. You probably know the whole story—how Jack Dolan talked to the men of the virtues of Mr. Ware, and how he made a vow then and there that henceforward he would abstain from the use of intoxicating liquor, and how forty or so other men joined him in signing the pledge, and so on. Well, a good many people said it was all done so suddenly that it wouldn't amount to anything—that the men would all be drinking again in a few days, and so on. Well, these people seem to have been mistaken, I am glad to say, for, with only one or two exceptions, the men have all kept their pledge and have now formed an organization having for its object the promotion of the temperance cause and the general betterment of the working man's condition and mode of living. They held their first meeting last night, elected officers and made their plans for the first year's work. Jack Dolan was elected president, and a good one he will make, for he is a born leader. I understand they are going to fit up a reading room where the men may go at any time and stay as long as they like, instead of going to the saloons, and then once or twice a week regular meetings will be held, with interesting programs. It is the best thing that has happened in Linville in a good many years, and you should feel proud of the fact that your husband's life among his fellow men is responsible for the organization of such a club and that it is named after him."

"I am pleased to hear the good news," said Mrs. Ware, "and hope the club may be instrumental in making better men and happier homes. The saloons have been an awful curse in this town."

"Indeed they have," said Banker Smith, as he started for the door, "and in every other town where they are allowed to exist."

After the banker had gone, Mrs. Ware and Harry sat down to talk over the events of the evening, and each agreed that Banker Smith was anything but gruff or crabbed, and that his visit and the good news he had brought them was cause for great rejoicing.

Now that the danger of losing their household goods was past, they felt that they could get along some way, and Harry got busy with paper and pencil trying to figure out how many hens it would take to make them a comfortable living and how many pullets he ought to buy with the money he received for his cockerels, providing he could sell them. After getting things figured out to his own satisfaction, he wrote an advertisement offering the cockerels for sale. The first one did not suit him, so he wrote a second, then a third and fourth, and when finally he decided that he had it about right, he pushed it over to his mother for her opinion. She read it carefully and said it was all right with one exception. He had signed it "Harry Ware," and she asked him to change it to "Harold Ware."

"While you have always been called 'Harry,' she said, 'you were christened 'Harold,' and it would please me very much if hereafter you would sign your name 'Harold' instead of 'Harry.' You need not be ashamed of that name—in fact you should be proud of it. Will you make the change?"

"Sure, I will, mamma," he said. "I am glad to take the name of 'Harold,' and will always sign my name that way hereafter. I know it would please papa, too."

He re-wrote the advertisement, placed it in an envelope with his letter and got it ready for mailing the next morning. This was his first venture of this kind and he was somewhat anxious to know what the result would be.

"Why, say, mamma!" exclaimed Harry all of a sudden, "do you remember what papa said about the poultry show at Dexter this month? He said he hoped I could exhibit some of my Leghorns at that show, and that besides winning some prizes, I could probably sell some birds. I

wonder where that premium list is they sent me? Let me see, I put it—oh, I know,” and jumping up he went into his room, returning in less than a minute with a pamphlet in his hand. Seating himself at the table, he began looking over the pages of the premium list. Then taking his pencil he figured for several minutes, and looking up at his mother, he said:

“Guess I can’t go, after all, mamma. It would cost too much. Let me see—one dollar and twenty cents railroad fare for the round trip; about one dollar express; twenty cents apiece entry fee; ten birds at twenty cents would be two dollars. Altogether that would be four dollars and twenty cents. That’s a lot of money, especially for poor folks. Guess I’ll have to give it up. I would want to take ten birds—one pen, a male and four females, and five cockerels to sell. If I was sure I could sell a couple of cockerels for enough to pay expenses, I would go quick, but of course I don’t know about that. I might sell all five of them, and I might not sell any. Papa said if I was going to make a success of the poultry business, I would have to get a show record—that is, to sell the cockerels. The entries close day after tomorrow and the birds have to be there by Monday noon. Four dollars and twenty cents. No, I will give it up.”

“It is too bad you cannot go, Harry,” said his mother. “That does seem like a lot of money, but it almost seems as though you ought to sell two or three cockerels, anyway. Papa said they were from good stock and they surely look nice. Besides, you might take a premium, and that would help pay expenses. Let’s see—four dollars and twenty cents. I have about six dollars, and tomorrow you will get your egg money from Banker Smith. I believe you had better plan to go Harry. It may be a good investment. But you haven’t figured anything for meals or lodging for yourself.”

“I know,” said Harry, “but you can put up enough lunch to last me the two days I am there, and lodging will not be over twenty-five cents. If you say so, I will plan to go. I will have to send my entry fees tomorrow. I can ship the birds on the same train I go on Monday morning.”

"All right, Harry; I will bake you some little cakes and we can get something at the store—some cheese and dried beef, or something of that kind, and I will fix up a box of lunch for you to take with you. I might boil a few eggs for you."

"No, mamma, we can't afford to eat eggs when we can get thirty-five cents a dozen for them," said Harry. "Anything will do for my lunch. Bread and butter sandwiches and a little cheese will be all right."

And so it was arranged that Harry was to attend the poultry show at Dexter, and make an exhibit. It was a proud moment for Harry as he thought of this his first appearance in the show room, and his little heart fairly throbbed with joy in contemplation of the event. Going over to where his mother was sitting, he put his arm around her neck and said:

"You are the best and dearest mamma in the world."

Then kissing her good night, he went to his room and prepared for bed. It was fully two hours, however, before he got to sleep, and when he did he dreamed of a poultry show with his birds among the winners.

CHAPTER VII.

It was a cold, cheerless, blustery December evening in a big city—Chicago. The snow had been falling incessantly for twenty-four hours and traffic of all kinds was practically at a standstill. It was bitter cold and the wind blowing in from the lake seemed to penetrate even the heaviest clothing.

"My, this is awful weather for poor folks," mused Chester Burbank, the great criminal lawyer, as he settled himself snugly in a massive leather upholstered chair in his luxuriously furnished room at the club and lit his after-dinner cigar. He had taken but a few puffs at the cigar when his telephone bell rang and he got up to answer it.

"Tell him to come right up," he said in response to a message from the office on the first floor, and then, hanging up the receiver, he went out into the spacious hall to receive his friend at the elevator landing.

"Glad to see you, old man," he said, as his friend—a brother attorney named Dobson—laid aside his heavy coat and wraps. "To be frank with you," he continued, "my pleasure is of the selfish sort. Somehow I am a little down-cast this evening, why I do not know, and I needed someone to cheer me up a bit. Here, have a cigar, and take this rocker; it's easier than that chair you are sitting in. Bitter cold out, isn't it?"

"That doesn't half express it," answered Dobson, as he lit the cigar and seated himself in the rocker. "Wouldn't wonder if there'd be a number of people frozen to death tonight in this old city. I pity a man who has to be out such a night as this."

"Dobson, I believe there's a touch of sentiment in your nature, and I am glad of it," said Burbank. "So many people go through this life with their eyes self-centered and not giving even a thought to the less fortunate. I believe that a little sentiment in a man's nature helps to make him a better, nobler man, and while sentiment does not really mix with business—especially in our profession—there are times when it does no harm to let it work its way to the surface."

"You're right, Burbank," replied Dobson, "but no one would ever imagine there was any sentiment in your nature to hear you in some of your prosecutions in court."

"That's where the lawyers for the defense of a prisoner have the advantage over those for the prosecution," said Burbank. "They can call to their assistance all the natural sentiment of their nature, and if they are any good at all can arouse the sentiment in the natures of the jurymen without any trouble."

The two attorneys talked and smoked for a couple of hours, and Dobson had just remarked that it was time he was going, when he espied a copy of an evening paper on the table.

"If you will excuse me for just a minute, Burbank," he said, "I will take a glance at your paper. Right here on the first page is what I want to see."

"All right, old man," replied Burbank, "you may give me the other part and I will keep you company."

Dobson handed his companion a part of the paper and



"Dobson, I believe there's a touch of sentiment in your nature, and I am glad of it," said Burbank.

settled down to read something on the first page that seemed to interest him in particular.

"Say, Dobson," laughed Burbank, "I think you gave me the little end of it this time. There's nothing in this part of the paper except market news, racing dope and advertisements, and none of these interest me."

Dobson was too deeply interested in what he was reading to reply, and Burbank smoked his cigar and carelessly looked over the paper he held in his hand.

"My God!"

Dobson was aroused by this exclamation from Burbank, and looking across the table he saw that his friend's face was as white as the snow outside.

"What's the matter, Burbank? Are you ill? Shall I call the house physician?" he asked, all in one breath.

"No," replied Burbank, "I am all right. Just a neuralgic pain. You might get me a drink of ice water, if you will."

"Ice water!" said Dobson. "Why, man, that's the worst dose you could take for neuralgia. However, I will get it. But really, I think you ought to have a physician. You are pale as a ghost. You are not well, Burbank."

"I will be all right in a minute," answered Burbank. "I often have these spells. They are nothing at all."

Dobson ordered up a pitcher of ice water, and unbeknown to Burbank, had also ordered a glass of whiskey. The attorney drank the water, but refused the liquor. In a few minutes he seemed to have recovered, and surprised Dobson by asking him if he knew where Linville was, what road it was on and when a train left Chicago for this town. Dobson replied that he had never heard of the town and had no idea where it was.

"Well, I must find out at once, Dobson," said Burbank, "and I am going to find out before I go to bed. I guess I can get the information down stairs. It is necessary that I go to Linville, wherever it is, at once. I must go, Dobson; I must go."

"I doubt very much if there will be a train out of Chicago on any road within the next twenty-four hours," said Dobson. "It is still snowing and it is reported in tonight's paper that some of the roads are tied up already."

"Well, let's see," mused Burbank; "this is Saturday night. I can certainly count on getting a train Monday night or Tuesday morning, at the latest. It may be two hundred miles away or it may be only a short distance from the city. We will go down to the office and find out."

As the two men descended in the elevator, Dobson wondered what there could be in Linville that was of so much importance to his friend Burbank, and wondered why the decision to visit the town had come into his mind so suddenly. He decided that it must be the home of an important witness in some case in which Burbank was interested, and let it go at that. He had no idea that a little five-line advertisement in the paper he had handed his friend was responsible for the whole thing. The advertisement read as follows:

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* * * * *
*
*   FOR SALE—Owing to the death of my father, I
*   am compelled to sacrifice my flock of Single Comb
*   White Leghorns, as we need the money. Best strain.
*   Fine cockerels for sale cheap. Harold Ware, Lin-
*   ville, Illinois.
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* * * * *

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CHAPTER VIII.

"The next station at which this train stops is Linville. Linville is the next station."

This announcement by the colored porter did not seem to interest anyone in the car with the exception of one passenger—a fine-looking, middle-aged gentleman with a Van Dyke beard and to all appearances a gentleman of culture and refinement. He was the only occupant of the car who made a move as if to prepare for leaving the train at Linville. Picking up a couple of magazines and a time-table, he placed them in his grip, snapped the lock and then sank back in his seat and looked out at the window as the train sped along between great banks of snow piled high on either side of the track, the work of the giant snow plow that had

been sent through the day before to clear a way for the trains.

In spite of his efforts to control himself, Chester Burbank—for it was he—found himself in a state of agitation that was altogether a new sensation to him. It seemed to him as he sat there in the Pullman that he had been in a sort of trance for the past two or three days, since the Saturday night previous when he accidentally ran across Harold Ware's little advertisement in the paper. Although now it was only Tuesday forenoon, it seemed to him that weeks had passed since the Saturday night before.

As soon as his friend Dobson had left him at the club on that eventful evening, he had returned to his room, and after reading the little advertisement over two or three times, he opened a drawer in his secretary and carefully took out a bundle of papers. Among the papers was a picture—the photograph of a beautiful young lady with laughing eyes and bewitching mouth. The picture was somewhat faded and showed the effects of repeated handling. Seating himself by the table, he looked at the picture long and earnestly, laid it down only to pick it up again, and finally jumping up, he lit a cigar and paced the floor for half an hour, stopping occasionally at the table to take another look at the photograph.

He had secured a copy of a railway guide at the office of the club and had located the town of Linville. He had also found that a train left Chicago for this town at 8 o'clock each week-day morning, as well as another each afternoon. But, as his friend Dobson had predicted, he had also found out by telephoning to the office of the road that no trains were running, on account of the severe snow storm, and that it was impossible to tell just how soon the first train would be started out.

And now, after nearly three days of suspense, here he was within a few miles of Linville—and the original of the photograph over which he had pondered so long and earnestly. As he realized that within a very few minutes he would set foot in the little town that had so suddenly become of interest to him, his heart palpitated as it had never done before and his agitation became intense.

Finally the engineer blew a long blast on the whistle, the porter came forward to assist the passenger for Linville with his baggage, the train began to slow down and the next minute stopped in front of the station.

Owing to the fact that the big factory was closed down, a number of men were at the depot when the train pulled in, and they stood in groups on the depot platform.

Approaching one of these groups, Mr. Burbank asked:

"Do any of you gentlemen happen to know Harold Ware?"

A half dozen men started to answer at once, but one of their number, Joe Gleason, raised his hand as a signal for them to keep still, and said:

"Yes, stranger, we all know Harold Ware, or did know him at least. As noble a man as ever lived. The poor fellow died a couple of weeks ago. He—"

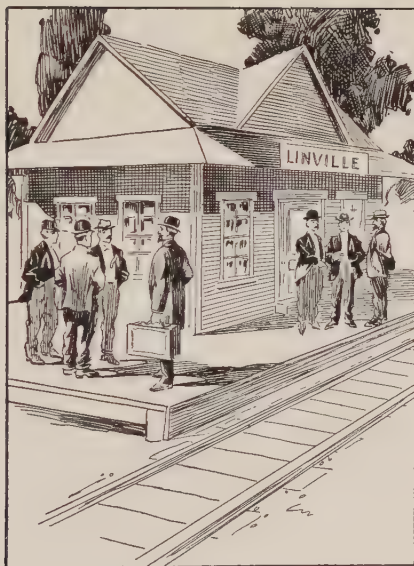
"Yes, I know, my man," interrupted Burbank. "I know Harold Ware is dead, but did he not have a son of the same name?"

"He had a son 'Harry,'" replied Gleason, "but I never heard him called 'Harold.' Perhaps that is his name, though. He's a fine little fellow, just like his father. He lives with his mother in the old home up at the other end of town. He's not there now, though. He went over to Dexter yesterday to a chicken show. He has got some fancy chickens—White Leghorns I believe he calls them, and he took a few of them to the chicken show at Dexter. Mrs. Ware is at home, though, and if you want to see her I will be glad to show you the way to the house. It ain't very far, only—"

"I thank you very much," again interrupted Burbank, "but it is the boy I want to see. How far is it to Dexter and when is there a train?"

"Dexter's on the other road, running east and west," replied Gleason. "The depot is over yonder a couple of blocks. You can get a train at two o'clock. It takes about an hour to run over there—it's only about thirty miles."

"Two o'clock. Well, let's see," mused Burbank, looking at his watch, "it's now twelve o'clock, so I will have a couple of hours to wait. Where is the hotel?"



"Do any of you gentlemen happen to know
Harold Ware?" asked Burbank.

"Right straight up this street about three blocks," replied Gleason. "I'll show it to you. I am going up that way anyway," and picking up Burbank's grip he started off.

"Wait just a minute, please," said Burbank. "I notice that most of you men are wearing white ribbons in the lapels of your coats. May I ask what it means?"

"Glad to tell you, sir," answered Gleason, and as he spoke the men crowded up closer, each one making a special effort to display his little white ribbon. "We have organized a temperance club which we have named 'The Harold Ware Club,' and every member wears a white ribbon. You see, sir, we all worked in the factory with Harold Ware, and while some of us used to kind o' make fun of him because he was different from the rest of us—didn't drink or smoke or swear or gamble, or do any of those things—still down in our hearts we respected him, yes, loved him, and his death was a shock to all of us. In memory of his life and character, sir, we took the pledge and organized a club. We are going to have some badges with the name of the club printed on them as soon as we get to work again, but the factory has been closed for several weeks and we are out of money. We have rented a room uptown for our club, and the boys spend their time there instead of in the saloons. It's nothing to brag about, but does very well. We have papers and books there to read and the boys play checkers and games like that. It beats hanging around the saloons, I tell you. As soon as we get to work again we are going to fix it up a little. But just now we can't do much."

"I am glad to know of your club and its purpose, my men," said Burbank, "and I hope you will all be true to the pledge you have made. Perhaps at some future time I may have the pleasure of visiting your club room. Before I go to the hotel I want to shake hands with each one of you."

And commencing with Joe Gleason, he shook hands with each of the men, and after again admonishing them to be true to their pledge, he started up the street with Gleason for the hotel. As they walked he plied Gleason with questions in regard to Harold Ware, guarding against saying anything that would arouse the suspicions of his companion, and also asked about the club, its membership, etc.

They had walked a few steps in silence, when Gleason said:

"Well, now, say, mister, if you want to see Mrs. Ware, I would just as soon as not walk up there with you."

Burbank did not answer for a minute. He could not conscientiously say that he did not want to see Mrs. Ware, for it seemed to him at that minute that he would give half his worldly possessions if he dared go directly to her home, but he knew that it would not be diplomatic in the first place nor proper in the second place for him to do so.

"No," he said, "I thank you for your kind offer, but it is the boy I want to see. I understand he has some chickens for sale."

They had reached the entrance of the hotel just as Burbank made the above remark, and as he reached out his hand for his grip he noticed a look of astonishment on Gleason's face. He surmised its cause and said:

"You are undoubtedly surprised to learn that I want to buy some chickens, but I have a special purpose in doing so. By the way, won't you come in and have luncheon with me?"

"No," said Gleason, "I must go home. The folks will be expecting me. I thank you just the same. I am glad you are going to buy some of Harry Ware's chickens, for, goodness knows, they need the money. Good bye, sir."

"Good bye, my man," said Burbank, as he extended his hand, "and may God bless you."

As Chester Burbank entered the dining room at the hotel, he realized that he was not the least bit hungry, although he had eaten breakfast two hours earlier than usual that morning. It seemed to him that a new world was opening up to him, and his mind was so engrossed with thoughts of what he had seen and heard that he had to ask the waitress to repeat the bill of fare she had rattled off as she stood beside his chair. He gave his order in an absent-minded manner and when it was placed before him he ate very little of it, took a couple of swallows of coffee and left the dining room. He found there was still over an hour before time for the train, and leaving his grip at the hotel he started out for a stroll about town. Somehow he imagined he was walking in the direction of the Ware home,

though he had no idea where it was or what it looked like. As he walked he wondered if Mrs. Ware would recognize him should he happen to pass the house, and whether she would call to him in case she did recognize him. One minute he hoped that he would pass the house, and the next minute that he wouldn't. Come to think of it, the years that had passed since last she saw him had wrought great changes in his personal appearance, and there was not one chance in a thousand that she would recognize him even if she met him face to face.

Returning to the hotel, he took his grip and started for the depot, reaching there only a minute or two before the train arrived that was to carry him to Dexter.

CHAPTER IX.

"Can you direct me to the poultry show that is being held here in the city?" asked Chester Burbank, addressing the clerk at the hotel in Dexter, where he had arrived only a few minutes before.

"Yes, sir," replied the clerk. "It is in the town hall, two blocks west of here."

After Burbank had left the hotel, the clerk turned to the proprietor and said:

"What do you suppose that fellow wants at a chicken show? He don't look to me like a fellow who would be interested in chickens."

"I dunno," said the proprietor. "You can't always tell by a man's looks what he is interested in. Where's he from?"

"Chicago," answered the clerk, consulting the register. "J. A. Stuart, Chicago. He looks like a big gun of some kind to me. He acted sort of nervous like when he registered."

While Chester Burbank was averse to practicing deceit of any kind, he had decided that for the time being, at least, it would be best to conceal his identity, so he registered as "J. A. Stuart," at both the Linville and Dexter hotels.

As he walked down the street toward the town hall, Burbank rehearsed in his mind the plan of procedure after

he had found the boy, Harold Ware. He had his plans all carefully made before he left Chicago, but these plans were based on the expectancy of finding the boy in Linville. Now, however, that Harold was away from home, other and more complete plans could be made.

Reaching the town hall, he paid the admission fee and entered the poultry show, the first one he had ever attended. Long rows of coops confronted him and he started down one of the aisles, hoping that he would run across Harold Ware by chance. Up one aisle and down another he walked slowly, paying little attention to the exhibit, but keeping close watch for the boy. Failing to find him, he made inquiry of one of the attendants, who pointed out his exhibit, but said he did not know where the owner was. While the two were talking, another attendant came up to them and said:

"That's a sad case—this little boy that owns these birds. He fainted away a few minutes ago, and come to find out he hadn't had anything to eat since yesterday afternoon. He's from Linville. He brought a box of lunch with him, but someone stole it late yesterday afternoon, and so the poor kid didn't have any supper last night or any breakfast or dinner today. No wonder he fainted. I couldn't—"

"Where is the boy?" interrupted Burbank, grasping the speaker by the arm. "Take me to him quick!"

Astonished, the man led Burbank to an ante-room, where, surrounded by a half dozen men, little Harry Ware sat propped up on a chair, while one of the men bathed his head and face with camphor and water.

Hastily laying aside his silk hat and throwing off his coat, Chester Burbank, the great criminal lawyer who had been accused time and again of being absolutely heartless, brushed the men aside and kneeling beside the chair took one of the little fellow's hands in his, asked a few questions and ordered that a physician be sent for at once. It was ten minutes before the doctor arrived, but, to the astonishment of everyone present, Burbank remained kneeling beside the pallid little sufferer, speaking an occasional cheering word and gently bathing his face with the water and camphor. The doctor made an examination, asked a few

questions and announced that it was simply a fainting spell due to hunger and fatigue, and that as soon as he had a little nourishment he would be all right.

"Someone call a cab," commanded Burbank, "and I will take him to the hotel and have him cared for. Here, doctor," handing him a bill, "take your pay for this visit out of that. And, by the way, I want to see you a minute."

The two went to another part of the room and talked earnestly for a few minutes, and then, as the arrival of the cab was announced, Burbank picked the boy up in his arms and carried him down to the cab, ordering the driver to take them to the hotel.

After they had left the show room, all kinds of conjectures were made as to who Burbank might be and why he was interested in the boy. It was something out of the ordinary to see a man of Burbank's apparent wealth and position take such an interest in a poor little fellow who did not even have money to buy a bite of lunch. All agreed that it was an extraordinary case.

Arriving at the hotel, Burbank ordered the best room in the house, and although Harry insisted on walking up the stairs, his benefactor picked him up and carried him to their room. Then after letting him rest a few minutes, he ordered a light lunch, telling Harry to eat that and after a little they would have a good meal. The boy, though naturally a little backward, needed no urging and soon the lunch had disappeared.

While Harry was eating, Burbank had an opportunity to study the little fellow's features and noted that he bore a striking resemblance to his mother as he (Burbank) had known her long years before. After Harry had finished eating, Burbank said:

"Now, my boy, I want you to tell me about yourself, your name, your family, your circumstances, and how you came to be at the poultry show without funds with which to buy your meals, and so on. Don't be afraid to tell me everything."

Burbank already had much of the information he asked for, but wanted to hear it from the boy's own lips.

Harry's natural timidity had almost completely disap-

peared by this time, and he began his story by telling his name, where he lived, how he happened to become interested in poultry, and so on. Then he told of his father's long illness, the closing of the factory, his father's death, the hardships endured by himself and mother, their straitened circumstances, the promise he made his father, etc. It was a long story, but Burbank sat in silence drinking in every word and with moist eyes. Had he obeyed an impulse that kept welling up in his heart, he would have grasped the boy in his arms and made a full confession as to who he was and why he had come to Linville and later to Dexter. But he had other plans and must for the time being conceal his identity and his purpose.

"I have the best mamma that ever lived," said Harry, "and although I am only a boy now, some day I will be a man, and then she will have nice things that she can't have now. I wish you could see my mamma, Mr.—er—I don't know your name."

"Stuart," said the lawyer, and for a minute his conscience rebelled at the deceit he was practicing.

"She's just the dearest, sweetest mamma," continued Harry, "and I love her better than everything and everybody else in the world."

"Has your mother no relatives who could help her?" asked Burbank.

"Well, I will tell you, Mr. Stuart," replied Harry. "She has relatives—a father and mother and some sisters back east, but they won't do a thing for her because they didn't want her to marry my papa, just because he was poor. They wanted her to marry another man who had plenty of money. Her sister, Harriet, wrote her an awful letter after papa died. She called papa a pauper and said she supposed I would grow up to be a pauper, too. It hurt mamma awfully and I think it was mean in—in—Harriet. I never call her 'aunt' Harriet. She will be sorry some day, I know. The rest of mamma's folks never write to her at all."

There were a hundred questions that Burbank wanted to ask Harry, but he dared not do it. If the plans he was formulating were carried out successfully, he must be cautious, so he curbed his curiosity.



It was a long story, but Burbank sat in silence,
drinking in every word and with moist eyes.

"Now my boy," he said, "tell me about the poultry show, what brought you here, how you came to lose your lunch, and so on."

"Well, you see," replied Harry, "papa said if I was going to make a success of the poultry business, I must show my birds, and he intended for me to show them here at Dexter. After he died I almost gave it up, but at the last minute mamma and I decided that I had better come. We couldn't afford it, but thought surely I could sell two or three cockerels for enough money to pay the expense, and besides I thought I would win a prize or two. Mamma put up a box of lunch for me—enough to last the two days of the show, but yesterday afternoon someone took it from on top of my coop where I had put it after eating my dinner, so I had no supper last night and no breakfast or dinner today. I was awfully hungry, Mr. Stuart, but did not have any money to buy anything with."

"Didn't you win any prizes?" asked the lawyer.

"No," replied Harry, "not a single prize. You see I didn't know that white birds had to be washed, but brought mine just as they were, and they didn't stand any show with the nice, clean, white birds in the other coops. As soon as I saw the other birds I knew I wouldn't get a prize, and it pretty near made me sick."

"And you didn't sell a bird, either?" queried Burbank.

"Not a single one," answered Harry. "No one paid any attention to my birds except a nicely-dressed lady who came along this forenoon, and when she saw the 'For Sale' sign on my coop of cockerels she asked me how much I wanted for one of them. I hardly knew what to tell her and got so excited that when I went to take one of the birds out of the coop I upset the water cup and spilled a little of it on her dress—not enough to hurt anything. She got awful mad and said a lot of mean things, called me a 'blunderbuss' and said she didn't want any of my chickens at any price. After she had been gone a few minutes I noticed that she had left her pocketbook beside my coop where she had laid it when she brushed the water off her dress with her handkerchief. I picked it up and started out to find her. I saw her talking to a gentleman and went up and

handed her the pocket-book. Instead of thanking me, she asked the gentleman to keep me there until she could count the money and see if I had stolen any of it. Of course she found it all right and let me go. There was a lot of money in the pocket-book, a big roll of bills and some silver. It hurt me to think that she suspected me of stealing any of it."

If there had been any doubt in Mr. Burbank's mind as to the honor and honesty of the boy before him, these doubts were dispelled by Harry's recital of his finding the pocket-book and returning it to the owner intact, despite the fact that he was hungry and without food or money to buy it with. He could feel his heart warming toward the little fellow and realized that an attachment was forming that would change both his own and Harry's plans for the future, if indeed Harry had made any plans. Somehow it seemed wicked for him to carry his deception as to his own identity and purpose any further, but under the circumstances it seemed necessary, and he said:

"Well, now, my boy, I want to buy some chickens, and I wouldn't wonder if you and I could strike a bargain. How many chickens have you in the show and what are they worth?"

"I have ten," replied Harry, "one pen—a cockerel and four pullets, and five cockerels in another coop. Of course you wouldn't want all those cockerels, but you could take the four pullets and the choice of the cockerels. Was you looking for Single Comb White Leghorns?"

"Well—er—that's what yours are, isn't it?" stammered Burbank. "To tell the truth, I don't know much about chickens, but I saw your exhibit before I saw you—in fact I was looking for you when I found you in the ante-room. I have a special purpose in desiring to buy all the chickens you have in the show, if they are for sale."

"Oh, yes, they are all for sale," answered Harry, "but if you don't know much about chickens I would not want to sell you six cockerels and only four pullets. One cockerel is all you need."

"I know, my boy," said Burbank, "but I just said I had a special purpose in wanting to buy all of them. What are they worth—the whole lot?"

"I hardly know," replied Harry, greatly excited at the prospect of selling his entire exhibit. "Let's see, there are ten of them. I thought I would ask a dollar apiece if I got a chance to sell any of them, but of course if you took them all I would sell them cheaper, say seventy-five cents apiece. That would be seven dollars and fifty cents for the ten."

"Good gracious, boy," exclaimed Burbank, "that would be only a little more than the price of ordinary poultry in the market. I would be glad to give you several times that amount, as I believe they are worth it. Suppose we set the price at twenty-five dollars?"

Twenty-five dollars! Harry wondered if he was really awake, or was he dreaming or in a trance. He was almost afraid to speak, lest he should wake up and find it all a dream.

"Perhaps you do not want to sell all of them," queried Burbank.

"Oh, yes, I do," replied Harry, "but they are not worth that much money, I am sure."

"I am willing to take a chance on that," said Burbank, as he reached in his pocket and took out a well-filled wallet. Selecting five five-dollar bills, he laid them on the table beside Harry, who was now sure he was dreaming, and said:

"There's your money, my boy, and now the chickens are mine. I am more than satisfied with my bargain, and hope you are."

Great tears rushed to Harry's eyes and down his cheeks as he looked first at the money lying before him and then at his benefactor. They were tears of joy and they increased in volume as he thought of what a glad surprise it would be for his mother when he reached home.

Chester Burbank, who owed much of his success as a criminal lawyer to his ability to read the minds and thoughts of other people, knew what Harry was thinking about, and wished he might make it as many hundreds of dollars. He was the first to speak.

"And now that that matter is settled, Harold," he said, for the first time calling the boy by his given name, much to the latter's surprise, "I guess we had better order supper. What time does the train leave for your home?"

"Seven o'clock," replied Harry. "That will get me home at eight, and mamma will be at the depot to meet me, as she expects me on that train. I am very anxious to get home and tell mamma of my good fortune, and I only wish you was going on that train, so she could thank you for your kindness to me. I am going to tell her all about you, and how glad she will be to know that I met such a splendid gentleman. If you will give me your address, Mr.—Mr.—"

"Bur—er—ah—Stuart," stammered Burbank, as Harry hesitated. For the first time in years Burbank found himself frustrated, but it seemed that a thousand thoughts—of the past, the present and the future—were chasing one another through his mind, and for an instant he forgot that he was a deceiver and was living for the time being under an assumed name.

"I was going to say, Mr. Stuart," continued Harry, "that if you would give me your address I know mamma would be pleased to write you and thank you for your kindness to me. You do not know what it means to us to get twenty-five dollars just now, and besides mamma will be so thankful to you for caring for me as you have done today, when I was sick. Will you give me your address, Mr. Stuart?"

"Certainly," answered Burbank, as he tore a leaf out of a little blank book. He had been doing some rapid thinking while Harry was talking and had his plans all made. "I haven't a card," he said, "but will write the address on this paper.

"J. A. Stuart, General Delivery, Chicago," is what he wrote, and folding the paper he passed it over to Harry.

"And now we will go down to supper," he said, "and by the time we get through supper it will be time for your train. Before we go down, however, I want to say to you what I may not have a chance to say later. From our conversation this afternoon I am convinced that your training has been of the best and you have in you the making of a man of whom not only your mother, but all your friends and acquaintances will some day be proud. Keep on as you have started and everything will come out all right.

Be honest and honorable under all circumstances, shun evil companions, let liquor alone, and be good to your mother. Do these things and I have no fear for your future. The world today stands in need of good men—men of honor and integrity and sound principles. So live, my boy, that some day you can fill one of the niches reserved for men of this kind. Always bear in mind that your mother is the best friend you have on earth, and I judge that you have one of the best of mothers. Be good to her—you will never regret it. May God help you.”

The two descended to the dining room, where supper was all ready and waiting for them, but somehow neither of them seemed to be hungry, although Harry had had nothing to eat except a light lunch for more than twenty-four hours. He was so excited now that he could not eat.

On the way from the hotel to the depot they stepped into the poultry show for a minute, and after taking a last look at his first exhibit, Harry notified the superintendent that he had sold the birds to Mr. “Stuart,” who would take care of them, and away they went for the depot, reaching there just as the train pulled in. In less than three minutes Harry was on his way home and Burbank was on his way back to the hotel, there to sit and think and think and think.

CHAPTER X.

“Dobson, if there’s a man on earth whom I feel I can trust, that man is yourself.”

The speaker was Chester Burbank, and the above remark was addressed to his friend and brother attorney, Mr. Dobson. The two men had taken luncheon together and were sitting in the lounging room at the club.

“In all the dozen years that I have known you,” continued Burbank, “you have never betrayed or deceived me, and I have never hesitated to take you into my confidence. Not only that, but I have always had the highest regard for your judgment, and, as you know, I have come to you for counsel and advice times almost without number. I have valued your friendship and counsel more than you ever imagined, and—”

"Well, now, hold on just a minute, Burbank," interrupted Dobson. "I don't have any idea what you are driving at or what you are going to spring on me, but before you go any further in your eulogies, I want to say that it is I who have been the favored one, and I am sure that our friendship has been more beneficial to myself than to you, and I trust that it has been mutually enjoyable and pleasant. I believe we understand each other thoroughly, Burbank, and if there is anything you want to take up with me—and I judge there is—do not hesitate to do so. I am at your service."

"Yes, there is something I want to take up with you," said Burbank, "but you little suspect the nature of it. It is a matter that is sacred to me—as sacred as the memory of my angel mother, and there is not a person living except you to whom I could or would divulge it. I need not only your advice, Dobson, but your assistance in other ways. Before I go any farther, however, let us go to my room, where we can be assured of secrecy."

The two men arose and taking the elevator, ascended to the third floor and entered Burbank's room. Burbank closed the door behind him and he and Dobson seated themselves. It was fully two minutes before either of them spoke. Finally Burbank said:

"Now that we are here alone, Dobson, I am going to make a clean breast of a matter that has completely upset me, as you may have noticed. You will recall that one evening a couple of weeks ago, as we sat in this same room, you picked up a copy of an evening paper that lay here on the table, and upon my request, you gave me a part of it—the part containing the small advertisements. You will also probably recall the fact that I became somewhat excited and you thought I was ill. You will remember that I asked you if you knew where Linville was and what road it was on, and that together we went to the office and found out. You also know that I went to Linville a few days afterward, though you have no idea what took me there. Now if you will be patient, Dobson, I am going to tell you the whole story, and then I am going to ask you for your advice and assistance."

"I am all attention," said Dobson, "and I assure you that if I can be of any assistance to you, the pleasure will be mine. Proceed when you are ready."

"It is a long story, Dobson," said Burbank, "and I hesitate to bore you with it. But I simply must—"

"No apologies are necessary," interrupted Dobson. "Let us have the story."

With considerable hesitancy, Burbank commenced a recital of the "story," starting in at the time when he was a boy back in New England.

"Among the friends of my youth was a young lady of the name of Mildred Haines," said Burbank. "She was a beautiful girl, full of life and vivacity, and before I was out of my 'teens she had won my heart. After graduating from the city school, father sent me to law school in New York City, and during the first year of my absence from home Mildred and I corresponded regularly. During the second year her letters were less frequent, and finally she quit writing to me altogether. I was not exactly discouraged—in fact I had a very exalted opinion of myself, and while I suspected that some other fellow had usurped my place in her affections, I did not doubt for a minute but that I could rout him upon my return home and I did not lose any sleep over the matter.

"After I graduated from the law school and was duly admitted to the bar, I returned home with the intention of resting a few months before taking up the actual practice of law, and also with the intention of winning back my old place in the affections of Mildred Haines and of ultimately making her my wife. Imagine my surprise and chagrin, if you can, when I found that she was not only madly in love with another fellow, but actually engaged to marry him. He was a poor fellow of the name of Harold Ware, a mechanic, with hardly a dollar in the world, while I already had the promise of a competence from father and had the best of prospects in my profession. Her parents entered a strenuous objection to her marrying this man Ware, and even threatened to cast her off and disinherit her entirely if she did marry him. I plead with her and tried to convince her that she was making a mistake, and while I be-

lieve that she had at one time cared for me, no argument that I could use was strong enough to break the attachment that existed between herself and Harold Ware, and disregarding the threats of her parents and my pleadings, she married him. As soon as they were married they started for the west, and for fifteen years I had heard nothing of them and did not even know where they were living, or whether they were living at all or not, until that evening a couple of weeks ago when you handed me a part of the evening paper and I saw an advertisement signed by one Harold Ware, offering some chickens for sale at a sacrifice and saying that owing to the death of his father they were in need of the money. I recognized the name at once and was sure that it was a son of my successful rival of fifteen years ago. You understand now, Dobson, why I became so excited that evening."

Continuing, Burbank told his friend of his visit to Linville and Dexter, going into detail and telling him everything, even to the deception he played in taking the name of "J. A. Stuart." After finishing this part of the story, he said:

"And now, Dobson, I will tell you how you can serve me, if you will. As you have undoubtedly already surmised, the old love in my heart for Mildred Haines—the sweetheart of my youth—has been rekindled, and although I have not seen her for fifteen years, I am just as anxious to win her now as I was back in New England in our younger days. I don't know that she has given me a thought in all these years, and, to tell the truth, it has only been occasionally that I have thought of her during recent years; but now that she is a widow and in straitened circumstances, I am almost frantic to help her and to—yes, Dobson, to marry her! Of course I realize that I must wait a reasonable time—a year, at least—before it will be proper for me to even see her, and that is why I want your assistance. I want you to go to Linville at once, if you can, and arrange some plan by which I can help her—or support her, if you want to call it that—without her knowing where the help is coming from. I am all at sea as to how this can be accomplished and am going to leave the whole thing to you.

As you know, I have plenty of means, and not a soul dependent upon me. I would like to arrange to give her at least a hundred dollars a month for a year, and then—and then, Dobson—you understand. What do you say? Can I depend upon you?"

"My dear Chester," answered Dobson, extending his hand, "I would go to the end of the earth for you, and especially in so noble a cause. I will go to Linville tomorrow, if you say so. Have you no suggestions whatever to make as to how the matter can be arranged?"

"None whatever," replied Burbank, "unless you could arrange with some insurance agent in Linville to pay Mrs. Ware a certain amount of money on the pretext that her husband was insured in the company he represents. That has occurred to me as being a fairly good scheme. He could pay her a thousand dollars, for instance, or twelve hundred, which I would of course, furnish. What do you think about it?"

"Not a bad idea at all," replied Dobson. "I'll tell you what I'll do. I will go to Linville tomorrow and fix it up somehow, and will be back here the day after tomorrow, if possible, and report."

"All right, Dobson," said Burbank, "but remember that you are not to mention my name under any circumstances. Bear in mind that in my connection with this case I am 'J. A. Stuart.' And say, Dobson, while you are in Linville I wish you would inquire about the Harold Ware Club that has been organized there among the factory employes. If you get a chance, find out what kind of quarters they have to hold their meetings in, and also get the names of the officers of the club. I will tell you why I want this information when you return."

"All right, Burbank, I will do my best," said Dobson. "This is new business to me, but I guess I can handle it all right. To tell you the truth, you have got me interested in the case and I anxiously await developments. If you have no further instructions for me, I guess I had better be going, as I have a little business to attend to yet this afternoon."

"I do not know of anything further," replied Burbank.

"In fact I have placed the whole matter in your hands and I am sure you will handle it all right. Good luck to you."

The two men shook hands, and bidding Burbank good-bye, Dobson took leave.

CHAPTER XI.

When Dobson stepped off the train at Linville the next afternoon, he admitted to himself that he had tackled a proposition that would call into play all his tact, diplomacy and caution. He went direct from the station to the hotel, and after registering, he inquired of the clerk as to the insurance agents in the town. The clerk named a half dozen agents and wound up by saying that the banker, Mr. Smith, probably did more insurance business than anyone else in town. After inquiring about each of the agents, Dobson decided to try the banker.

Arriving at the bank, he presented his card and inquired for Mr. Smith. The clerk took the card into a private room, returning inside of a minute, followed by a gray-haired, kindly-faced gentleman who said:

"I am Mr. Smith. What can I do for you?"

"If convenient, Mr. Smith, I would like to see you a few minutes in private," replied Dobson. "I have a very important matter to take up with you."

"What is the nature of the matter?" asked Mr. Smith, with just a touch of suspicion in his voice.

Up to this time it had not occurred to Dobson that bankers are apt to be suspicious of strangers, and as the thought entered his mind it made him a little nervous and somewhat abashed. He could feel his face reddening and when he spoke again there was a slight tremor in his voice.

"To be frank with you, Mr. Smith," he said, "I cannot state the nature of my business unless I can see you a few moments privately. I will take only a very few minutes of your time, however. I appreciate the fact that your time is valuable, and, in fact, so is mine, but I have reason to believe that you will never regret having given me just a few minutes of your time and attention. I will be as brief as possible. It is an important matter—so important in fact,

that I came down here from Chicago to fix it up, and I must get it fixed up today."

"Very well," said Mr. Smith, "you may come into my private office."

The eye of every employe of the bank was on Dobson as he entered the president's private room, and he felt that there was a suspicion among them that he was a crook of some kind. He felt relieved when the door was closed and he was alone with the banker, who motioned him to a chair.

"Now, Mr. Smith," he said, "I will be as brief as possible, but before I lay the matter before you I wish it understood that it is to be treated as strictly confidential, no matter what the outcome. I believe you are a man of honor and I do not hesitate to trust you. The matter in question concerns the lives and future happiness of at least three people. May I proceed?"

"Proceed," said Mr. Smith. "You may trust me."

"Thank you," replied Dobson. "Now, in the first place, I understand you do an insurance business in addition to your banking business."

"Yes, we do a little insurance business," replied the banker.

"Very well," said Dobson. "Then I want to deal with you as an insurance agent rather than a banker. Now I will state my case. A few weeks ago a certain citizen of your town died and left a widow and son, who, it has been reported, are in straitened financial circumstances and need assistance. My mission here is to arrange a plan whereby they can be assisted financially without their knowing where the assistance comes from, and I want you to help me, if you will."

"What is your plan?" asked Mr. Smith.

"It is this, Mr. Smith," replied Dobson. "I want to arrange for the payment to the widow of certain sums of money—enough to keep herself and son in comfortable circumstances. It occurred to me that this could be done by making her believe that it is insurance money, the proceeds of policies that she did not know her husband carried."

"May I ask who the widow is?" asked Mr. Smith.

"Yes," replied Dobson, "her name is Mrs. Harold Ware."

"Mrs. Harold Ware!" exclaimed the banker, extending his hand. "Do you mean to say that your mission here is to provide for Mrs. Ware and Harry? I am at your service, sir, and will be glad to assist you in any way that I can. I know her well, and knew her husband. A noble fellow he was, and she is a noble woman, as you probably know."

"I know nothing about her except what has been told me," replied Dobson. "I am here as the representative of another gentleman who knew Mrs. Ware years ago, and on account of old friendship he wants her provided for. I am not at liberty to divulge his name at this time. The question to be decided now is how to provide for her without letting her know where the money comes from, or that it is a gift. Do you know of any better plan than the one I suggested a few minutes ago?"

"Let me see," mused the banker. "Yes, I know of a better plan. Just wait a minute."

He pushed an electric button and the office boy entered. Addressing the boy, Mr. Smith said:

"If anybody inquires for me, tell them I am busy and will be busy for the next hour or two, and do not let anyone disturb me."

"All right, sir," replied the boy as he retired from the room.

"Now, Mr.—Mr.—Dobson," said the banker, consulting the card Dobson had presented, "I will tell you my plan. Something like a year before Harold Ware died he invested all the money he had—several thousand dollars—in a mining proposition that proved a fizzle, and he lost every dollar he put into it, which left him practically stranded financially. Why not tell Mrs. Ware that the proposition proved a success, after all, and that the money she is getting is from this investment?"

"A capital idea," replied Dobson. "That beats the life insurance plan all to pieces, because it sounds more plausible, and besides certain amounts of money can be paid to her as monthly dividends upon the investment. A capital idea."

"How long is the plan to be kept in operation?" asked Mr. Smith.

"Indefinitely," replied Dobson. "The gentleman whom I represent is very wealthy, and a hundred dollars a month is nothing to him. Besides, he has another and better plan to put in operation as soon as—well, as soon as he deems it proper."

"Oh, I see," said Mr. Smith, with a chuckle. "There's a little love affair behind it all. Am I right?"

"I am not at liberty to divulge too much of my client's affairs," laughingly replied Dobson, "but you are not far out of the way. I wonder, by the way, if Mrs. Ware has the contracts and other papers connected with the investment you spoke of? If she has, it would be a good idea to get them, as it would help us to get up a plausible story."

"Yes," replied Mr. Smith, "she has them and I will send for them at once."

He hastily wrote a note and calling the office boy, told him to take it to Mrs. Ware and hurry back with the papers she would give him. In less than half an hour the boy returned and handed the papers to Mr. Smith.

The two men looked them over carefully, and after a little further discussion it was decided that Mr. Smith should notify Mrs. Ware that the investment was not a bad one, after all, and that she would have a permanent income of something like a hundred dollars a month.

"Somehow I don't like the idea of deceiving the woman," said Mr. Smith. "I hate deception of any kind, but it seems as though, under the circumstances, it is justifiable. However, before I go any further, I must have the assurance that your friend, or your client, will carry out his part of the contract. It would be a shame to—"

"Wait just a minute, Mr. Smith," said Dobson. "My client is in dead earnest in this matter and is not only a gentleman of honor, but as I said a while ago, is very wealthy and amply able to carry out his part of the contract. However, I do not expect you to take any chances and I have here a Chicago draft for twelve hundred dollars, which will take care of the monthly payments for the first year. We will, of course, expect you to pay Mrs. Ware interest on the money, which can simply be added to the payment each month. I suppose that will be satisfactory?"

"Perfectly so, sir," replied Mr. Smith. "The matter now assumes the aspect of a business transaction. I do not want you to think, Mr. Dobson, that I distrust you or your client, but you know we bankers are naturally cautious, and especially so at a time like this, when there is a stringency in the money market. By the way, Mr. Dobson, why can't you see Mrs. Ware and explain the matter to her? It would please me very much if you would do so, and while I would still be a party to the deception, I would feel better about it if I did not have to shoulder the whole thing."

"I had not thought of that," replied Dobson, "and while I, like yourself, dislike to deceive anyone, I am willing to take the responsibility of practicing deception in a case of this kind. Where can I see Mrs. Ware?"

"I can send for her or we can go to her house, as you choose," said the banker. "Perhaps it would be best to go to the house."

"I think so," replied Dobson, "but before we go I must familiarize myself somewhat with the company I am supposed to represent and the conditions of the contract. It will only take me a few minutes."

In ten minutes Dobson announced that he was ready to go, and the two men left the bank for the Ware home. While Dobson had not anticipated seeing Mrs. Ware personally, now that he was on his way to her home his mind was filled with curiosity and an anxiety to see her.

Arriving at the house, Mr. Smith rang the bell, and the next minute Dobson found himself being introduced to Mrs. Ware. Mr. Smith merely said:

"Mrs. Ware, let me introduce Mr. Dobson, of Chicago, who has some business to transact with you."

She bade the gentlemen be seated and waited for Dobson to speak.

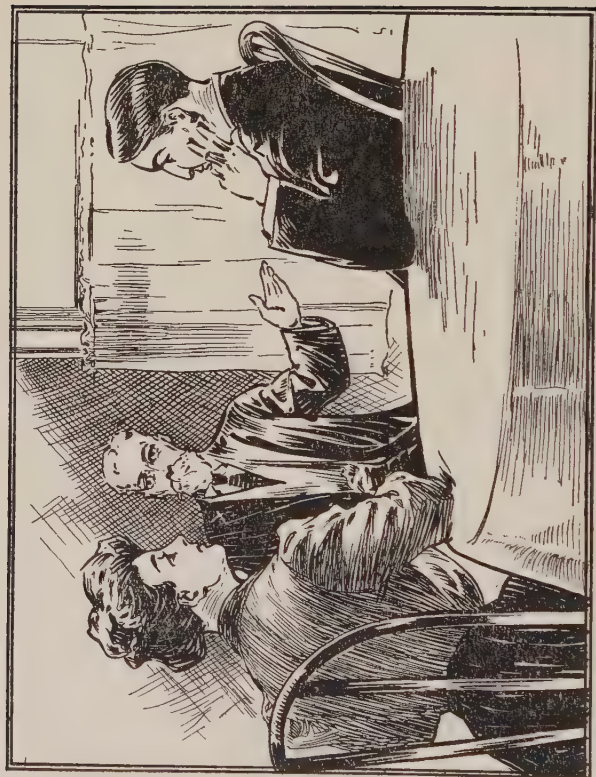
"I am here," he said, "as the representative of the Monte Cristo Mining Syndicate. As you probably know, your husband bought some of our stock a little over a year ago, and we are glad to tell you that the Syndicate has met with even better success than we had anticipated and we are in shape now to pay our stockholders monthly dividends. These dividends will be paid through the banks. I have just

arranged with Mr. Smith here to pay you your dividends each month through his bank. They will amount to something like one hundred dollars a month. Now, for certain reasons, Mrs. Ware, I will ask you to keep this matter to yourself, for the time being, at least. We do not want any publicity whatever given our success, as it would mean a fight to keep our outstanding stock from being gobbled up by some syndicate of capitalists, and the promoters of the Monte Cristo would suffer in consequence. We made a mistake and sold more stock than we intended to, and a majority of the stock of the Syndicate is owned by outside parties. You understand our reason for asking you to keep the matter to yourself."

During this recital by Mr. Dobson, Mrs. Ware sat as one in a trance, her eyes fixed upon the speaker. When he had finished, a flood of tears rushed to her eyes and down her cheeks, and, losing control of herself, she sobbed violently for a few minutes. Presently, however, she dried her eyes, and, addressing Mr. Dobson, said:

"I don't know what I can say that would give you even the remotest idea of the feeling of appreciation and gratitude in my heart at this time. The good news comes as a complete surprise, as we had understood that our stock was worthless and there was no possibility of ever realizing a dollar upon it. As you probably know, my husband, Mr. Ware, died only a short time ago, and the money he invested in this stock represented the savings of years. How I do wish he had lived to enjoy with me the benefits of the investment. His heart was broken when he was told that the money he had invested was lost, and while I do not blame your company, as the report seems to have been untrue, still I feel that the disappointment hastened his death. If only we had received this good news three months ago, I believe he would be alive today. How did the report that the Monte Cristo Syndicate had failed get started, anyway?"

Dobson did not answer for a minute. In fact he was secretly ashamed of himself and wished that he had left the whole matter in the hands of Mr. Smith. It seemed a shame to deceive this poor woman, but now there was nothing else to do but carry out the deception.



During this conversation Mr. Dobson had had an opportunity to study Mrs. Ware, and he did not wonder that his friend Burbank was anxious to win her heart and hand.

"Well, I will tell you," he replied. "You see the country is full of unscrupulous sharks who resort to all kinds of schemes to fleece the public. One of these schemes is to start a report that certain stock is worthless, and then buy up that stock at a ridiculously low figure, often making millions of dollars in this way.

"Yes, I see," replied Mrs. Ware. "It's strange that none of them ever tried to purchase our stock in the Monte Cristo. We would have sold it at almost any price after we heard it was practically valueless."

"Of course you would," said Dobson, "but we happened to know of their scheme and headed them off, thus protecting our stockholders."

"The Monte Cristo must have struck it rich to be able to pay such large dividends," said Mrs. Ware.

"Yes, we did strike it rich," replied Dobson, "and the stockholders are to reap the benefit."

"Well, if the other stockholders are as needy as we are," said Mrs. Ware, "it will prove a godsend to them. I will now be able to keep Harry in school and will not need to worry for a while at least."

During this conversation, Mr. Dobson had had an opportunity to study Mrs. Ware, and he did not wonder that his friend Burbank was anxious to win her heart and hand. Although no longer young, as the world counts age, she was a most attractive woman, with beautiful features, clear complexion and graceful form. What must she have been when Burbank knew her fifteen years ago? Dobson almost coveted Burbank's prospects as he studied the woman before him.

"Well, I guess there is nothing further to explain, Mrs. Ware," said Dobson, "and we will be going. Before leaving, however, I want to again warn you not to say a word about this matter, even to your most intimate friends. Mr. Smith will pay you your dividends monthly and you can depend upon getting them promptly. Do not under any circumstances write direct to the Syndicate, but leave all matters of this kind to Mr. Smith, who will look after your interests. I will bid you good day, and hope to meet you again at some future time."

After shaking hands with Mrs. Ware, the two men departed. On their way back to the bank, Mr. Smith said:

"According to the card you presented to me, Mr. Dobson, I believe you are a lawyer. Am I right?"

"Yes," replied Dobson.

"Well, all I have to say," said the banker, "is that if you are as good a lawyer as you are a liar, you are certainly a success."

"Had to do it," replied Dobson. "Once started, the deception had to be carried out. I wouldn't do it again, however, not even for the dearest friend I have on earth. Although I was lying in a worthy cause, I felt a good deal as I imagine a criminal must feel. It wasn't a pleasant experience, by any means."

Arriving at the bank, Dobson completed his arrangements with Banker Smith, taking his receipt for the twelve hundred dollars he had paid him, also drawing up a contract, which Mr. Smith signed. This done, Mr. Dobson said:

"Well, I will not take any more of your time, Mr. Smith. I am certainly glad to have met you and wish to thank you for your kind co-operation and assistance. I wish to thank you, also, on behalf of my client, whom I trust you will have the pleasure of meeting some day. You have my card and I will be pleased to hear from you at any time. In fact both my client and myself would appreciate it very much if you would keep us advised as to the affairs in the Ware household, insofar as you are able so to do. I hope to see you again in the near future."

"I will be glad to do so," said the banker, "and I look forward with pleasure to the time when I may have the privilege of meeting your client and the benefactor of a woman so worthy as Mrs. Harold Ware. May God bless you both."

On his way from the bank to the hotel, Dobson admitted to himself that there was really more in life than he had ever imagined. Like Burbank, he was a bachelor of middle age, and practically all of his life since graduation from college had been spent in his office or at the club where he made his home, with an occasional pleasure trip by way of

recreation. But today a new world had opened to him and he had discovered that the winning of fame and fortune was not all of life, after all. He wished that he, too, had an old sweetheart whom he could befriend, or that he knew of some old friend who needed assistance, or even some worthy stranger. His experience this day had given him only a taste of the joy that comes to the heart of a person who befriends another in the hour of need, and he craved for more of it.

After eating his luncheon, Dobson took a stroll around town. As he was passing a rather plain two-story building his attention was attracted to a placard posted at the entrance to the stairway leading to the second story, which read:

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*      HAROLD WARE CLUB      *
*      Rooms Open from 9 A. M. to 10 P. M.      *
*      Everybody Welcome      *
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* * * * *

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Dobson's mind had been so fully occupied with other matters that he had entirely forgotten Burbank's request that he find out what he could about the Harold Ware Club, and he was glad that he had noticed the placard. Ascending to the second floor, he entered the club room and was at once impressed with the scanty furnishings—four cheap tables, no two alike, an assortment of some three dozen chairs of nearly as many patterns, and an old stove that had evidently been purchased second-hand. There was no carpet or rugs on the floor and no pictures on the walls. A generous supply of reading material, magazines, newspapers, etc., was on the tables, however. When Dobson entered, the only occupant of the room—a middle-aged, rather rough looking fellow—sat by the stove reading a paper. He arose and advanced toward Dobson, with an inquiring look. Dobson was the first to speak:

"Is this the Harold Ware Club?" he asked, at the same time extending his hand.

"It is, sir," was the reply as the two men shook hands.

"My name is Dobson," said the attorney, presenting his card. "I happened to notice the placard at the foot of the stairs and was curious to know what kind of a club you had up here. May I know your name, sir?"

"My name's McConnell, sir—James McConnell," was the reply. "We haven't much of a club-room, but we hope to get it fixed up after a bit. You see, sir, the factory where most of us work, when we work at all, has been closed down for some time, and the boys are most of them broke flat, so we can't do much fixin' up until after we get to work again. The factory's going to start up again next Monday morning, so Mr. Bascom has given notice, and I tell you the boys are glad of it. It's purty tough to be out of work and broke in the middle of the winter."

"I imagine so," replied Dobson. "How long since you have had any work?"

"Well, now, mister," said McConnell, "I will tell you the truth. I haven't worked to amount to anything for nigh onto two years, and I'm ashamed to say it. To be honest with you, booze got the best of me and I purty near went to the dogs. But since I joined this club I haven't taken a drop and don't intend to. I am a machinist by trade, and a good one, too, even if I do say it myself, and Manager Bascom has promised me my old job in the factory, so I expect to go back to work with the boys next Monday morning. I ain't the only booze-h'ister, either, that has quit the game and joined the Harold Ware Club—not by a blamed sight. Most of the boys were purty strong at the game, but have cut it out, and instead of spending their time in the saloons, they spend it at home with their families or here at the club. Time's about all they've had to spend lately, too, as most of them were broke when the factory closed. It's a little early for the boys yet. They don't generally get around until about 3 o'clock, but they'll be here. Our president, Jack Dolan, ought to be here purty soon. I would like to have you meet him."

"Yes, I would be pleased to meet him," replied Dobson. "I guess I will wait a few minutes and perhaps he will come."

"Here he is now," said McConnell, as the door opened and in walked big, rough, good-natured Jack Dolan, with a happy smile on his face.

Dobson at once introduced himself and upon invitation of the president laid aside his overcoat and hat. For the next hour and a half the two men were engaged in earnest conversation, Dolan giving the attorney a complete history of the club, the events that led up to its formation, their reason for calling it the "Harold Ware Club," and its purpose. During the hour and a half the members of the club congregated, and President Dolan introduced Mr. Dobson personally to each member present, after which the attorney made a brief address in laudation of the club and its purpose, calling forth the vociferous applause of his hearers.

* * * * *

Dobson was elated. He had not found an old sweetheart, nor an old friend who needed help, but he had found the opportunity he had been hoping for—a chance to lend a helping hand where it was needed and deserving, and as he walked up the street to the hotel he found himself formulating plans that would mean much for the Harold Ware Club.

CHAPTER XII.

It was a happy group of men that gathered outside the gates leading to the great factory on Monday morning. Fully fifteen minutes before the time for the gates to swing open, a number of the old employes had gathered, and when the gatekeeper finally unlocked and opened the gates nearly every man was present, and there was a regular rush for the factory, the men acting more like a lot of school boys than mature men. Manager Bascom had taken his place at the door to the factory through which it was required that all employes must pass and be checked, and as each man passed him the manager shook him by the hand and welcomed him back.

There was general rejoicing throughout the little town of Linville. The old employes had not even dared to hope that the factory would be started up full blast from the

first, but had anticipated that a few men at a time would be put to work and that it might be some weeks before the full force would be employed. Consequently when Jack Dolan announced at a meeting of the Harold Ware Club a few nights previous that Manager Bascom had notified him that the factory would reopen on Monday morning and that it was desired that every one of the old employes return to work, a cheer went up that fairly shook the building.

Everything about the factory was just as it had been left when the men quit work several weeks previous, with the exception of the bench at which Harold Ware had worked so long and faithfully. This was draped in black and as the men passed it more than one of them brushed away a tear. Above the bench was fastened a white card upon which was a rosette of black ribbon and the words: "In Memory of Our Beloved Comrade."

When the employes had all gathered and just before time for the whistle to blow, Manager Bascom got upon a bench and made a brief address, expressing his appreciation of the loyalty of the men and assuring them of the best wishes of himself and the owners of the factory. He alluded feelingly to the death of Harold Ware and announced that as a mark of respect to the memory of his life and character the bench at which he had worked would be draped for thirty days. As he finished speaking, the whistle sounded, the great engines were started and each man jumped for his place, eager to do his best.

The blowing of the factory whistle was indeed a welcome sound in every home in Linville. In many homes it meant more and better food; it meant new shoes and warmer garments for the children; it meant less privation for the mother—in fact it meant a betterment of conditions generally, and many a mother's heart was filled with joy at the welcome sound. In one home, however, the joy was not unmixed with sadness. This was the home of Mrs. Harold Ware. While she rejoiced to know that the factory was again in operation, and while she knew it would mean much to the families of the employes, still there was a feeling of sadness and loneliness in her heart as she thought of the almost numberless mornings when she had kissed her

husband and bade him good-bye as he started for the factory and began his day's work when this same whistle sounded. And then how happy she was through the day as she contemplated his return home in the evening, and how she delighted to meet him at the gate and walk up the path to the house with him, arm in arm. She almost dreaded to have evening come now. She would hear the whistle blow releasing the men from their duties, but she would watch and long in vain. He would not come.

"But," she said to herself, brushing away the tears, "I must be brave for Harry's sake," and she busied herself with her household duties. As she worked she hummed a verse of the song, "Let Me Lean Harder on Thee."

Harry had been out taking care of his chickens, and bringing an armful of wood into the kitchen he threw it into the box beside the stove and then started in to help his mother with her morning's work.

"Say, mamma," he said, "do you think we can afford to buy an incubator? It is pretty near hatching time and I want to raise a lot of chickens this year, so that I will have a nice lot of pullets to lay eggs next winter. Of course I can hatch the eggs with hens, but I would have to buy sitting hens, as Leghorns don't sit. It seems to me it would be about as cheap to buy an incubator. What do you think?"

"What will an incubator cost?" asked his mother.

"That depends on the size and the make," replied Harry. "Some cost more than others. I guess I could get one for about fifteen dollars that would do all right."

Fifteen dollars seemed quite a lot of money to Mrs. Ware to put into an incubator, but she remembered that she was to have an income of a hundred dollars a month from her mining stock, and, besides, their income from the sale of eggs was now considerable, so she told Harry to go ahead and order the incubator.

The more Harry worked with his chickens, the more interested he became, and his mind was fully made up that some day he was going to have a mammoth poultry plant, with all the necessary equipment. His mother encouraged him, as she felt that the business experience he was getting out of his poultry venture would help to fit him for a suc-

cessful career in whatever vocation he might choose in later years. He had opened a set of books and kept an accurate account with his flock of Leghorns, making a record of all eggs produced and their value, the cost of feed, etc.

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On the Thursday following the reopening of the factory, notices were posted throughout the plant announcing that a special meeting of the Harold Ware Club would be held that evening, and requesting every member to be present, as a matter of special importance would be presented.

When President Dolan entered the club room at 8 o'clock on Thursday evening he found every member present, as well as several who were not members, but as there was no secrecy whatever connected with the doings of the club, everybody was welcome at its sessions.

Mr. Dolan called the meeting to order, and after the usual preliminary business had been attended to, he arose and said:

"Fellow members of the Harold Ware Club: It gives me pleasure to announce that I have a little surprise in store for you. Most of you were here a few days ago when a gentleman from Chicago—a Mr. Dobson—visited our club room and gave us a little talk. He seemed much interested in the club and talked with me an hour and a half, asking all sorts of questions. He wanted to know all about the club, its purpose, and so on. I didn't exactly know why he wanted all this information, but as I knew it could do us no harm, I answered all his questions the best I could. I noticed that he did considerable looking around and I had a good notion to ask him what his game was, but changed my mind. In this morning's mail I received a letter from Mr. Dobson saying that he was sending us a complete new outfit for our club room, including desks, tables, chairs, rugs for the floors and pictures for the walls, besides a stove and a few other things. He says this outfit is a present from himself and a friend by the name of Stuart. I never was so surprised in all my life, and haven't got over it yet. I didn't say anything about it to you men today because—well, to tell you the truth, I thought perhaps it was a joke

or something of the sort, and I didn't want to disappoint you. I had our freight agent investigate today, and he reports that the goods have been shipped, sure enough, and will be in on the local tomorrow. So I guess it's o. k. all right, and tomorrow night we will celebrate, if nothing happens. I want all—"

"Three cheers for Mr. Dobson!" yelled "Red" Griffin, jumping to his feet, and instantly every man was standing and three lusty cheers were given for Mr. Dobson, of Chicago.

"And three more for his friend, Mr. Stuart," called another member, and again the men cheered.

For the next few minutes pandemonium reigned in the Harold Ware Club. Hats were thrown in the air, the members shook hands with each other, and the excitement was intense. Finally order was restored and President Dolan continued:

"I was going to say that I will see that our new outfit is delivered at the hall some time tomorrow, and tomorrow night I want you all to be here and help to get things fixed up. Guess you won't need any coaxing. I would suggest that we have a grand opening Saturday night and invite the women folks. What do you say?"

"I make that a motion, Mr. Chairman," said Joe Gleason. And it carried, amid tumultuous applause.

"Now that that matter is disposed of," said the president, "we have a little other business to attend to. Are there any applicants for membership in the Harold Ware Club present?"

"Yes, here's one!" The voice came from the direction of the outer hall, and the next instant, to the astonishment of everyone, in walked Mr. O'Brien, the saloon keeper, hat in hand. He walked straight up to President Dolan, who was standing on a raised platform, and extending his hand, said:

"Mr. Dolan, I want to make application to join your club—that is, if you will allow me to do so."

President Dolan took Mr. O'Brien by the hand, but did not speak for a full minute, during which time there was a deathlike stillness throughout the room. Mr. Dolan and



The next instant, to the astonishment of everyone, in walked Mr. O'Erlen, the saloon keeper, hat in hand.—Page 99.

everyone else was dumfounded. It occurred to more than one member of the club that Mr. O'Brien was intoxicated and did not know what he was doing or saying. Finally the president said:

"Mr. O'Brien, this certainly comes to us as a surprise, and I hardly know what to say to you. You know the purpose of our club, but perhaps you do not know that each man who becomes a member of the club must sign the pledge and promise to not only not taste liquor in any form, but must promise to not even handle it. You see in your business—"

"I understand all that thoroughly, Mr. Dolan," interrupted the saloon keeper, "and I am ready to here and now sign just that kind of an agreement. I renew my application. Will you act upon it?"

"Why, yes, I will submit your application to the members, Mr. O'Brien, if you wish me to do so," said Mr. Dolan, "but I don't know what action they will take. Shall I present it?"

"If you please," answered O'Brien.

"Fellow members," said the president, "Mr. O'Brien, whom you all know, has just made application for membership in our club. Before asking you to vote on the application, I will ask if any of you know of any reason why Mr. O'Brien should not be made a member of the club? Has anyone anything to offer?"

The ticking of an old clock hanging against the wall was the only sound that was perceptible in the room for the next two minutes. No one made a move. Mr. O'Brien himself, who had remained standing beside the platform, finally spoke:

"Men," he said, "you are surprised because I have asked to be made a member of the Harold Ware Club. I knew it would surprise you, but I want to say that I am in dead earnest. I am not making application for membership in this club on the spur of the moment, but have given the matter careful thought. I have had it on my mind for weeks—ever since you organized this club, in fact, and I couldn't get away from it. I have been a saloon keeper here in Linville for a number of years, and I will admit that I have had

a profitable business as far as dollars and cents goes, but somehow during the last few weeks I haven't felt right about it, and this feeling has grown upon me until I fairly hate the business and am done with it this minute forever. Most of you men are friends of mine—or at least you were at one time, and I hope you are yet. I have watched you since you quit drinking and have noticed the change that has come over each one of you. You look better and I know by your actions that you feel better and that you are happier. And I know that your wives and children are happier. And now that the factory has started up again, your happiness should be complete. But how about me? Am I happy? No; I should say not! I am anything but happy, and never will be happy and contented until I become one of you. Don't imagine because I am a saloon keeper that I am a hard-hearted wretch, with no honor or manhood left. Not by a good deal. I am human, with a heart, like the rest of you, and you will find it out in the course of time. Like some of you, I have a family—a wife and a daughter whom I dearly love. They detest the business I am in, and, in fact, are ashamed of the fact that I am a saloon keeper. If only to please them, I ought to have quit the business long ago, but I hung on and tried to smother my conscience. But now I am done with it and want to become a member of your club. I promise you I will be a loyal member, too."

Mr. O'Brien sat down and the president asked if anyone else had anything to say before he called for a vote.

"I would like to ask Mr. O'Brien a question," said Joe Gleason. "I would like to know whether or not he has disposed of his saloon, or, if not, what he intends to do with it?"

"I expected some of you would ask me that question," replied Mr. O'Brien, "and my answer is simply this: Before coming up here I turned out every light in my saloon and locked the doors. I have the key here in my hand and will deliver it to your president. There are a couple barrels of beer and a few barrels of liquor in the cellar, besides what is in bottles and jugs in the barroom. I said a few minutes ago that I was done with the business, and I mean it. Your president can appoint a committee to pour every drop of that liquor into the sewer, if he thinks that is the best way

to dispose of it. I don't care what is done with it. Mr. Dolan now has the key to the saloon and it is up to him to do as he pleases with the liquor."

"Mr. President," said Joe Gleason, "I take pleasure in recommending Mr. O'Brien as a fit person to be made a member of the club, and move that his election to membership be made by acclamation."

"I second that motion," shouted at least a dozen members.

"All in favor of making Mr. John O'Brien a member of the Harold Ware Club will signify same by saying 'aye,'" announced President Dolan.

There was no need for Mr. Dolan to call for a contra vote, as every man in the room shouted "aye," and the next moment Mr. O'Brien was lifted bodily by "Red" Griffin and one or two others and carried twice across the room on their shoulders, amid the cheers and shouts of every member present.

CHAPTER XIII.

On a winter evening one year after Mr. Dobson's first visit to Linville we find Burbank and Dobson sitting in the former's room at the club, discussing the events of the year and planning for a joint visit to the little town to attend the opening of the Harold Ware Club's new rooms. The club has grown in membership during the year until its old quarters were altogether too small, and Dobson, upon one of his visits to the town, had secured new and commodious quarters in one of the best buildings in the town and he and Burbank had furnished them complete.

"Do you know, Dobson," said Burbank, "that although I have been looking forward with pleasure to the time when I would dare visit the little town, now that the time has arrived, I almost dread it. I don't know why, but it almost seems as if the whole thing is going to end in disappointment for me, after all. I may be a little pessimistic at times, although I may have no good reason for being so, but as the time draws near for me to visit Linville I dread it. You don't know, Dobson, what the outcome of this affair means to me. The year just passed has been the longest year of

my life, and at times I have been impatient because the days and weeks and months seemed so slow in passing. It seems as though my whole life has been sustained solely on the anticipation of what I have dared to hope was in store for me. Awake or asleep, the affair has occupied my mind, and if the strain was to last much longer I don't know what I would do."

"Cheer up, old man," said Dobson. "You simply have a little bilious attack. You have no reason whatever to anticipate that there is even a possibility of things not coming out as you want them. I believe I am in a position to speak advisedly, and I feel like congratulating you in advance upon the successful fruition of your plans. To use the expression of the street gamin, 'it's a cinch.'"

"Well, I hope you are right, Dobson," said Burbank, "but you know 'there is many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip,' and it would be just my luck—"

"Yes, just your luck to have everything turn out just as you have planned," interrupted Dobson. "Just leave things to me and I will show you that I am a general of no mean qualifications when it comes to successful manouvering. We will go to Linville tomorrow and you can sort of get the 'lay of the land,' and then you will be in position to make your advance cautiously and wisely. I am anxious to see the Harold Ware Club in its new quarters and am anxious to have you meet the members of the club, who, in turn, are anxious to meet you. Every time I have been down there during the past year they have inquired after you and have expressed a desire to meet you. There was great rejoicing when I told them that you would surely be down on the occasion of the opening of the new club rooms. I was surely fortunate in getting these rooms for the club, as they are the best in the town. I know you will be more than pleased with them and that you will not regret having so generously contributed to the needs of the club. I assure you, too, that I appreciate your kindness in allowing me to bear at least a portion of the expense. It has surely proven money wisely and judiciously invested, for the club has certainly been a great factor in uplifting the workingmen of the town and consequently a benefit to the community. It

will do your soul good to meet these men and as you look into their faces to realize that you have had a hand in making them better, nobler men. It's wonderful the influence this club has had among the workingmen in Linville. There is not now a saloon in the town, and probably never will be again. A former saloon keeper, Mr. O'Brien, is now one of the most enthusiastic members of the club. I had a talk with Mr. Bascom, manager of the factory, the last time I was down there, and he was delighted with the changed conditions. He raised the salaries of the employes of the factory a couple of months ago. He says it would have been impossible to have raised the salaries under former conditions, when the men were drinking and carousing nearly every night, incapacitating them for work the next day. But now it's different—the men come to work in the morning sober and cheerful and are capable of doing better work and earning more money. There has certainly been a big change in that little town, and it has all been brought about through the influence of the Harold Ware Club."

"Yes, it's wonderful," said Burbank, "and I am certainly anxious to visit the club and meet the members personally. To be honest with you, Dobson, I have begrudged you the pleasure every time you have gone down there. By the way, you wouldn't advise me to try to see Mildred on my first visit—tomorrow—would you?"

"Well, now, Chester," replied Dobson, "it seems to me that it would be better to wait a little while yet. Of course you would have time to see her tomorrow afternoon, but as our mission tomorrow is to see that the new club rooms of the Harold Ware Club are duly opened and dedicated, it seems to me that it would be better for you to wait at least until your next visit before trying to see her. However, Chester, you know best."

"No, I don't know best," said Burbank. "If I thought I did, I wouldn't have asked your advice in the matter at all. You are my counsellor and what you say goes. I will wait."

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When the train pulled into Linville the next forenoon Burbank and Dobson were suprised to find the town in holi-

day attire. Flags were in evidence everywhere and the business blocks were gaily decorated with bunting. As the train stopped at the station a brass band on the station platform struck up a lively tune, and as Burbank and Dobson alighted, big Jack Dolan rushed up and grasped Dobson by the hand. Without waiting for an introduction to Burbank, Dolan grasped his hand and said:

"This is Mr. Stuart, I believe. My name is Dolan. I am glad to meet you, Mr. Stuart, I assure you, and glad to welcome you to our little town, where, although a stranger, you are so well known and so dearly beloved."

Mr. Dolan then introduced Mr. "Stuart" to the other members of the reception committee, who shook hands with him and Mr. Dobson, after which they were ushered into a carriage, and, with the band in the lead and over a hundred men in line following the carriage, a start was made for the new quarters of the Harold Ware Club. As the procession moved along the main business thoroughfare, both sides of the street were lined with people—men and women, boys and girls, who waved their hands and cheered at the top of their voices. Both Burbank and Dobson were visibly affected by this demonstration and each wiped the tears from his eyes. This was something that was wholly unexpected by either of the gentlemen, as they had no idea that the opening of the new club rooms, which they had provided and furnished, would call for any such demonstration. In the carriage with them were Jack Dolan and Mr. O'Brien, who explained that the event was considered so important that the mayor of the town had declared it a legal holiday, which accounted for the large crowds on the streets, all business having been suspended and the schools closed for the day.

At length the carriage drew up in front of the building in which the new club rooms were located, and the four gentlemen alighted. Mr. Dolan led the way up the stairs, and as they were ascending Dobson said to Burbank in an undertone:

"Say, Chester, our friend Dolan prevented something of a mix-up down at the station. I was about to introduce you to him as 'Mr. Burbank' when he introduced himself to you

and called you 'Mr. Stuart,' In the excitement of the moment I had forgotten that you are for the time being 'Mr. Stuart,' but Dolan helped me out nicely.'

"That would have been a nice mixup," laughingly replied Burbank. "It wouldn't do for my identity to become known just yet."

As Burbank and Dobson entered the club rooms they were met by a committee consisting of the mayor of the town and members of the city council, who welcomed them and thanked them for the interest they had taken in the Harold Ware Club, and assured them that the town was theirs for the time being.

During the next hour Burbank and Dobson met each member of the club and others who happened to be present, after which they made a careful inspection of the club rooms and the furnishings, to see that everything was according to the plans they had made and that nothing was lacking.

Burbank was, of course, too modest to say it to the members of the club, but he told Dobson on the quiet that he thought them the prettiest, most cheerful club rooms he had ever seen. And Dobson agreed with him. Everything was of the best, and indeed it was a striking contrast to the one poorly furnished room the club occupied when Dobson made his first visit to Linville a year before. He was about to remark of the contrast to Burbank when Jack Dolan approached them and said:

"Dinner will be ready at the hotel in about twenty minutes, gentlemen, and before we go over there I want to show you a picture of the gentleman for whom this club was named—Mr. Harold Ware. Right this way, please."

As they followed Jack Dolan into another room, Burbank could feel his heart beating fiercely, but he tried to compose himself, as he knew he was facing a series of trying ordeals and that he must meet them bravely. Dolan led them to an alcove in which, standing on the floor and leaning against the wall, was a large picture covered with a white cloth. Tenderly he raised the cloth and there was exposed to view a life-sized crayon portrait of Harold Ware, in a massive frame. Burbank studied the features intently for several minutes, and, turning to Dobson, said:

"It's a fine picture of a noble man, Dobson."

"Yes, indeed," replied Dobson. "May I ask who made it, Mr. Dolan?"

"I'm sure I don't know," replied Dolan. "It is a present to the club from Mrs. Ware. I don't know where she had it made. It only came in this morning and will be hung in its place above and back of the president's chair by the time we get back from dinner. But I wanted you gentlemen to see it before it was hung on the wall. It is a perfect likeness. Of course neither of you gentlemen ever saw Harold Ware or you would admit that it is as good a picture as you have ever seen. He was a grand fellow and we are surely glad to have this splendid portrait to hang in our new club rooms. It must have cost Mrs. Ware a nice piece of money, but I guess since her husband died her folks back east are helping her, for she seems to have money now, and he did not have any life insurance. They say her folks are well-to-do, but they didn't like Harold Ware and wouldn't help her as long as he was living. But now I suppose they feel different about it."

Burbank and Dobson glanced at each other, but neither said a word.

"Well, gentlemen," continued Mr. Dolan, "I guess we had better be moving over toward the hotel. There will be quite a party of us and it will take a few minutes to get them together. If you gentlemen will get your overcoats on I will meet you at the door in about five minutes."

"Is the picture a good likeness of the original, Chester?" asked Dobson, as they stood at the door waiting for President Dolan and his party of friends whose guests they were to be at dinner.

"Yes and no," replied Burbank. "You know, Dobson, a person changes considerable in sixteen years. But I could see a strong resemblance to the Harold Ware I knew back in New England. I happen to have occasion to remember him pretty well, as you know. I am glad the people here think her folks are helping her financially. This affair is becoming somewhat complicated, Dobson, isn't it?"

"Yes, somewhat," replied Dobson. "But everything seems to be working out all right."

At this juncture Jack Dolan and his party, which included the city officials and prominent members of the club, came up and a start was made for the hotel.

An hour and a half later the party returned to the club rooms, and the balance of the afternoon was pleasantly spent in an informal way. Brief addresses were made by the mayor, the president and several members of the club, and these were followed by an address by Mr. Dobson. There was also a musical program, and altogether it was a most enjoyable occasion.

President Dolan announced that the evening session would commence promptly at 7 o'clock and that Mr. "Stuart" would make an address. This announcement was greeted with tremendous applause, at the conclusion of which President Dolan dismissed the gathering.

Long before 7 o'clock every seat in the main club room was taken, and a number were standing. Promptly upon the hour President Dolan called the assemblage to order and announced that the meeting would be opened by singing the national anthem, "America," after which the orchestra would render a musical selection, and then the speaker, Mr. "Stuart" would make an address. Burbank, Dobson and several others occupied the platform with President Dolan and when the song was finished Dobson whispered to Burbank that he had never before heard "America" sung with such spirit.

The orchestra had played only a strain or two of its selection, when there was a commotion in the rear of the room, near the entrance, and those on the platform looking that way saw that a lady dressed in black and heavily veiled had just entered, accompanied by a boy about 13 years of age. Jack Dolan hastily left the platform, and making his way down the aisle between the chairs, shook hands with the lady, spoke a few words to her and then led the way back toward the platform. It seemed that every man in the room was anxious to give the lady his seat, but Mr. Dolan passed them by and found seats for her and the boy well up in front, near the platform.

The orchestra was still playing softly, and as the newcomers drew nearer the platform, Chester Burbank, or "Mr.

Stuart," as he was known, turned pale and for a few seconds everything seemed black before him. He had recognized the boy as little Harold Ware, and although he could not see the lady's face, on account of the heavy veil she wore, he was sure she was Harold's mother—the sweet-heart of his youth!

Mr. Dobson also surmised that the lady was Mrs. Harold Ware and for a few seconds he, too, was somewhat frustrated. He noted the pallor on Burbank's face and knew that he had recognized her, or at least that he had surmised that it was his old sweetheart. Just what effect her presence might have on Burbank he did not know, but to avoid any confusion he slipped to the side of President Dolan and said:

"Mr. Dolan, I wish you would have the orchestra play one more selection before introducing Mr. Bur—er—Mr. 'Stuart.' I wish to talk with him a few minutes before he makes his address."

"Sure," replied Dolan, and he instructed the leader of the orchestra to render another selection.

Seating himself beside Burbank, Dobson said:

"The orchestra will play one more selection, Chester, before you will be called upon."

Burbank did not seem to hear his friend's words at all and made no answer. He seemed dazed and Dobson was a little worried.

Presently the lady in black began removing her veil, and as she uncovered her face Burbank laid his hand on Dobson's knee, and said, his voice trembling with emotion:

"Dobson, I am all undone. For heaven's sake get me out of here for a few minutes where I can get some air."

"All right, Chester," replied Dobson. "Wait just a minute while I speak to Mr. Dolan."

Taking a seat beside the president of the club, Dobson said:

"Mr. Dolan, our friend 'Stuart' is ill and it is necessary that we change our program a little. He is subject to spells of faintness at times, and I guess it is a little close in here for him. I will go with him for a few minutes' walk in the open air and think he will be all right again and able to

deliver his address. We will be back in five or ten minutes. You can keep the people interested somehow. You might explain to them that Mr. 'Stuart' is a little indisposed, so they will understand why we are leaving the hall. A few minutes in the fresh air will make him feel better."

"Sure, go ahead," replied Dolan. "I am sorry that he is not feeling well and hope he'll be able to deliver his address, as all the people are anxious to hear him. You can get out through the door at the rear of the platform. I will try to keep the people interested until you return and will have some windows opened so that the air will be better."

Once on the outside, Dobson took Burbank's arm and together they walked slowly up a side street, neither one speaking for a couple of minutes. Finally Burbank said:

"Dobson, I don't want you to think I am sentimental or foolish, or a weakling, but it don't seem possible for me to return to the hall and deliver my address, with—with—Mrs. —with Mildred sitting there before me. You saw her, I am sure, and you knew why I wanted to get away from there for a few minutes at least. I recognized the boy, Harold, as soon as they came in. You know I met him at the poultry show at Dexter a year ago. I told you all about it. As soon as I recognized him tonight, I was sure the lady with him was his mother, and you can't imagine, Dobson, what a feeling came over me. Then when she raised her veil and I saw her face—a face that to me is the sweetest in all the world—I can't tell you how I felt, Dobson. She looks just as she did sixteen years ago—a little older, of course, but her face has lost none of its sweetness and very little of its girlhood charm. Now that I have seen her again, Dobson, I am more anxious than ever to regain my old place in her affections and make her my wife. She has not recognized me yet, and I am glad of it. I hope she won't, at least not until the proper time comes. I think Harold recognized me, but he knows me only as Mr. 'Stuart.' I am not a coward, Dobson, but it don't seem as though I can carry out my part of the program tonight. It's strange that it had not occurred to me that Mildred would probably be present this evening. What had we best do, Dobson?"

"There's only one thing to do," replied Dobson, "and that is, return to the hall and do exactly as we had planned. I know it is going to be hard for you to make your address, but after you get started you will be all right. Shall we return?"

"Yes," said Burbank; "I believe it would be cowardly for me to run away now, and, as you say, the only thing to do is to go ahead with our program. Let us go back."

As the two men re-entered the club rooms, President Dolan was just finishing a brief address in which he had lauded Harold Ware, Mr. 'Stuart' and Mr. Dobson, and as he sat down there was generous applause. Burbank and Dobson took their seats on the platform, and upon being assured that Burbank, or Mr. 'Stuart,' as he was known, was feeling better and was able to deliver his address, President Dolan introduced him.

As Burbank stepped to the center of the platform there was a terrific outburst of applause and it was fully two minutes before quiet was restored so that he could begin his address.

He took as a subject for his address, "The Good that Men Do Shall Live After Them." He compared the effect and influence upon society of a good, wholesome, pure life, and a wicked, sinful life. In a masterful manner he showed that each life, whether good or bad, exerts an influence—unconsciously, perhaps—upon society, and that consequently there is a great responsibility laid upon each and every life. The world grows better or worse according to the way the people live and conduct themselves. A wicked, sinful life influences others to live wicked lives, while a pure life influences other people to live pure, clean lives. Were it not for the good influences that are constantly at work, the world would very soon drift into a state of the awful wickedness and wretchedness of Sodom before that city was destroyed. Pure, clean, upright living is the greatest influence for good in the world. A spotless life is a magnet toward which men are unconsciously drawn, and its influence is far reaching, even among depraved, wicked people.

The speaker referred to the fact that it is not always the man who can shout the loudest or pray the longest that

accomplishes the most good, but more often it is the quiet, unostentatious, unassuming man or woman whose daily life—at home and abroad—exerts an influence for good and for the uplifting and betterment of mankind generally. Such a man was Harold Ware. While perhaps he could not go into a pulpit and preach a sermon, or deliver an address, still his daily life, humble though it was, was a sermon more potent than any address ever delivered from platform or pulpit.

In concluding the speaker said:

“It has been said that ‘God works in a mysterious way His wonders to perform.’ We may refuse to believe the accounts of the performance of miracles when Christ was on earth; we may doubt the power of God to raise the dead, heal the sick, cause the waters to divide, or the wind to subside; but we cannot get away from the fact that there is an influence for good constantly at work in the world and that this influence must have a source of generation. It is not of man, for ‘man himself is vile’ and if left to his own volition would choose the downward course rather than the upward. Why not admit, then, that this influence for good comes from God and that the men and women whose lives are influential in inducing others to live upright lives are simply human agencies through whom God is working? The greatest compliment that can be paid a man or woman is to say that he or she has been chosen by the great God of the universe as one of His agents through whom He can do His great work of reformation and reclamation. He needs not only preachers to occupy the pulpits of the churches, and missionaries for foreign lands, but also laymen workers through whom He can reach a class of people who are not reached by the preachers or the missionaries and through whom He can send His benign influence into the factories, the streets, the highways and byways. We can but believe that Harold Ware was one of God’s chosen servants through whom He wished to work and through whom He accomplished a mighty work right here in Linville. God surely worked ‘in a mysterious way His wonders to perform’ in this little city, and we have in this club and its membership the most convincing evidence of the mighty

work that has been accomplished. It was part of God's plan that Harold Ware should be taken from you at a time when your minds and your hearts were ripe for the work that was to be accomplished, and while his death meant heartache and anguish for those who loved him, there is consolation in the thought that his life and his death resulted in a magnificent work for the betterment of his fellow men, and that his death was necessary in order that this work might be accomplished.

"I feel that you have honored me in allowing me to address you this evening," continued Burbank, "and assure you that both Mr. Dobson and myself owe you a vote of thanks for the liberal treatment we have received at your hands today. I have wanted to visit your club for a long time, but circumstances prevented. My friend Dobson has visited you several times during the past year and has kept me posted on affairs in your club and your city. These reports have only made me more anxious to visit you. God willing, I hope to visit you often in the future. The Harold Ware Club is named after a noble man and has a noble purpose. May God be with you through the months and years that are to come. I thank you for your kind attention."

There was most generous applause from all parts of the house as Burbank took his seat, and when it had subsided somewhat a call was started for Mr. Dobson, who arose and made a few brief and happy remarks, after which President Dolan announced that a request had come from Mrs. Ware that in closing the audience stand and sing, "God Be With You 'Till We Meet Again."

As soon as the song was finished, there was a wild scramble among those present to get to the platform and shake hands with Burbank and Dobson. Jack Dolan had left the platform and Burbank saw him standing beside Mrs. Ware, apparently waiting for an opportunity to bring her forward and introduce her. His mind was so occupied with thoughts of what he would say to her and whether or not she would recognize him that he was startled when he felt someone clutch his coatsleeve and say:

"Good evening, Mr. Stuart. Do you remember me? I

am Harry Ware, the boy who sold you the chickens at the Dexter poultry show."

Grasping the boy's hand, he drew him away from the crowd, sat down on a chair, took him in his lap, and, hardly knowing what he did, kissed him.

"Glad to see you, my boy," he said, gleefully. "How are you getting along?"

"Fine and dandy," answered Harry. "Mamma is down there and is waiting until the crowd gets away so she can come up and speak to you. Say, Mr. Stuart, I knew you just as soon as I saw you tonight, and I told mamma that you was the gentleman who was so good to me over at the Dexter poultry show. We were afraid when you went out that you wouldn't come back, and that we couldn't see you. But when Mr. Dolan said that you was ill and had gone out to get a breath of fresh air, we felt better. Mamma is awful anxious to see you. Ain't it funny that we hadn't found out that you was the same gentleman I met at Dexter? And say, do your hens lay now—the ones I sold you? I hope so. Did you raise any little chickens, and what did you do with those extra cockerels I sold you? I wish you was going to be here tomorrow. I would like to show you my chickens. I have a new poultry house and an incubator and brooder. Are you going to be in town tomor—oh, here comes mamma and Mr. Dolan."

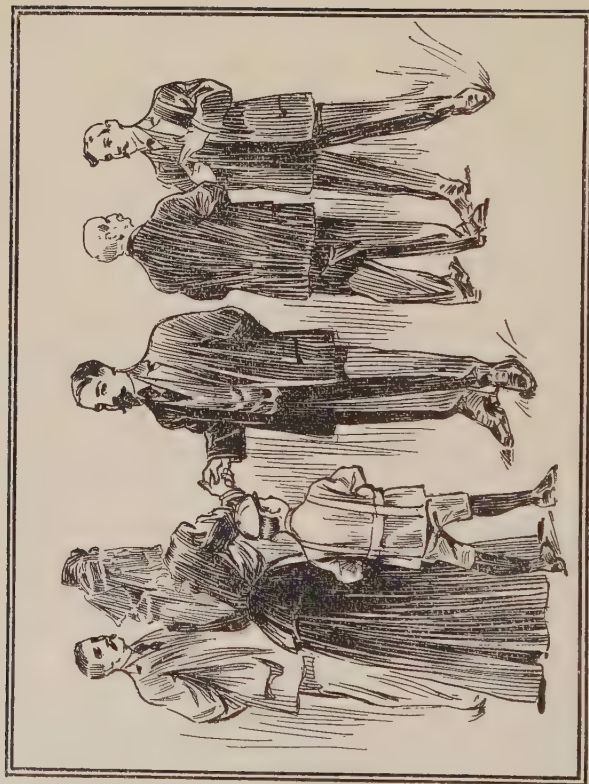
Harry had talked so fast that Burbank did not have a chance to say a word, and he was glad of it, for the boy had asked him questions that he did not care to answer just then. Looking up, he saw Jack Dolan making his way through the crowd to the platform, followed by Mrs. Ware. Steeling himself for the ordeal, he arose and advanced toward them, his heart beating terrifically.

"Mr. Stuart," began Dolan, "I want you to meet Mrs. Harold Ware."

As Burbank extended his hand it seemed as though he had suddenly been stricken with palsy and he said in a voice tremulous and faltering:

"I am indeed very glad to meet you, Mrs. Ware."

"I assure you that I—" began Mrs. Ware, and then she suddenly stopped and looked straight into Burbank's eyes.



"I assure you that I—" began Mrs. Ware, and then she suddenly stopped and looked straight into Burbank's eyes.—Page 115.

He withstood the questioning gaze for half a minute—it seemed an age to him—and then said calmly:

“Do you recognize me, Mildred?”

“Chester! Is it you?” gasped Mrs. Ware, as she sank into a chair beside her.

Jack Dolan witnessed the collapse of Mrs. Ware, and thinking she was fainting, he hastily summoned Mrs. Beman to look after her. Mrs. Beman helped her into another room and got her a drink of cool water.

“You had better rest a spell,” said Mrs. Beman. “I know it has been a hard day for you, and besides it was a little close in here this evening, even if the windows were open. So many people in a room make it close and stuffy. Do you feel better, dear?”

“Yes, I feel better,” replied Mrs. Ware. “I am all right, but guess I will rest a minute.”

“May I come in?” It was Chester Burbank who spoke. He had opened the door and was standing in the doorway.

Mrs. Beman turned to Mrs. Ware and asked:

“Will you see Mr. ‘Stuart,’ Mildred?”

“Yes,” replied Mrs. Ware, “tell him to come in.”

Burbank entered and seating himself beside Mrs. Ware, asked her if she was feeling better and told her he had sent for a carriage to take her home.

She thanked him and said: “Chester, tell me why you have practiced this deception. Why have you taken the name of ‘Stuart’ and what does all this mean? It seems as if my mind is in a whirl—as if I am dreaming or in a trance, or something of the kind. Tell me, Chester, what does it all mean? How did you happen to come here? How did you happen to be at the poultry show at Dexter a year ago? What does it all mean? Tell me, Chester.”

“I cannot answer your questions tonight, Mildred, much as I would like to do so,” replied Burbank. “I will make full explanation when the proper time comes, but not tonight. It is a long story and the hour is already late. Some other time I will tell you all.”

“What do you mean by ‘some other time,’ Chester? It may be months before you are in Linville again.”

“Yes it may be months, and it may not be,” replied Bur-

bank. "That depends upon circumstances. But I am here now and—and—if agreeable to you, Mildred, I will stay over tomorrow and will answer any and all questions you may choose to ask me."

"Will you, really?" exclaimed Mrs. Ware, and as her face kindled with joyous anticipation, she looked to Burbank as young and fair as she had looked sixteen years before. "Then I am satisfied, Chester," she continued, "and will expect to see you tomorrow. I am going to ask you to answer just one question tonight, if you will—only one. Did my folks have anything to do with your coming here?"

"Nothing whatever, I assure you," replied Burbank. "I have had no correspondence with any of your folks and have seen none of them since I was back at our old home over a year ago."

"Very well," said Mrs. Ware. "There are a thousand other questions I would like to ask you, but I will wait until tomorrow. There are a whole lot of things I want to know about. The whole thing seems like a dream. It's strange that I did not recognize you when you were on the platform, but one of the lights shined directly into my face and sort of blinded me. I must be going now. Remember I will expect to see you tomorrow. Don't disappoint me."

"Indeed I won't," replied Burbank. "At what hour shall I call?"

"O, let me see," mused Mrs. Ware. "Would it be convenient for you to come shortly before noon and take dinner with us? Harry would be delighted to have you—and—so would I."

"It will give me great pleasure to do so," answered Burbank. "You can count on my being there if I am alive. By the way, don't forget that there is a carriage waiting for you at the door. I will show you to it, if I may."

Together they went into the outer room and found Harry entertaining Mr. Dobson with stories of his poultry business. In her excitement Mrs. Ware had forgotten that she had not met Mr. Dobson, and when Burbank introduced them she scanned his features intently for a few seconds, and then said:

"I have surely met you somewhere, Mr. Dobson. Both

your name and your face seem familiar. Let me think a minute. Oh, yes, I remember now. You came to my home with Banker Smith a year ago to tell me that the stock I owned in the Monte Cristo Mining Syndicate had turned out all right, did you not?"

"Er—ah—yes," stammered Dobson. "I remember it since you speak of it. You have received your dividends all right, have you not?"

"Yes, every month," replied Mrs. Ware. "I am glad to know that you are a friend of Mr. Burbank's, and I hope to meet you again."

Then bidding Mr. Dobson, Mr. Dolan and a few others who had remained good night, she took Harry by the hand and started for the exit at which the carriage was waiting, accompanied by Burbank, who saw her safely to the carriage, bade her good night and returned to the hall.

Both Burbank and Dobson had planned upon returning to Chicago on a midnight train, but now that Burbank had promised to stay over one day, Dobson was the only passenger for Chicago out of Linville that night. Burbank accompanied him to the depot and after the departure of the train he returned to the hotel and for two hours, although it was after midnight, he sat in his room and reviewed the events of the day and the year that was passed, then retired and—dreamed of Mildred.

CHAPTER XIV.

Burbank arose promptly at seven o'clock the next morning and put in the forenoon strolling about town and at the club. At half past eleven he arrived at the Ware home and was met at the door by Mrs. Ware, who, it seemed to Burbank looked even more beautiful than he had ever seen her before, in her becoming pink house dress and her face radiant with suppressed joy. Harry insisted on showing Mr. Burbank his poultry outfit the first thing, and together they went out and looked the birds over, inspected the incubator and brooder and "talked chicken" until dinner was announced, and in fact during the entire dinner hour Harry insisted on "talking chicken."

Promptly at one o'clock Harry started for school, and Burbank and Mrs. Ware were left alone. No sooner had Harry gone than Mrs. Ware said:

"Now, Chester, I am going to hold you to your word. My curiosity has got the best of me and I want to know all about this whole affair. Tell me how you happened to come to Linville, how you happened to know of and became interested in the club, how you happened to be at the poultry show at Dexter, why you took the name of 'Stuart'—tell me the whole thing. Let us go into the parlor where you can find a comfortable chair and I will listen while you tell the story."

"All right," replied Burbank; "I am at your service and will attempt to give you the whole story. Before I start, however, I want you to promise that you will not ask any questions until I have finished."

"I promise," said Mrs. Ware.

"Well, to begin at the beginning," said Burbank, "I had entirely lost track of you and Mr. Ware, and had no idea where you were living, until one evening a little over a year ago my friend Dobson visited me in my room at the club where I make my home in Chicago, and just before he left he picked up a copy of an evening paper that lay on the table and asked permission to look over an article that appeared on the first page. I gave him permission to do so, of course, and asked him to give me a part of the paper, which he did. It happened that the part he gave me contained nothing much except sporting news and several pages of small advertisements. The sporting news did not interest me at all and I carelessly looked over the small advertisements, not because I was interested in them, but just to kill time. I ran my eye up one column and down another, carelessly, when of a sudden I saw the name, 'Harold Ware,' signed to an advertisement offering some chickens for sale and announcing the death of his father. I was sure that it was your son who had the chickens and your husband who had died."

Burbank then told of his first visit to Linville a few days later, and of his going to the Dexter poultry show in search of Harold. He told of meeting Joe Gleason upon the oc-

casion of his first visit to Linville, who told him about the Harold Ware Club and its purpose. In fact he told everything just as it had happened, with one exception: He was very careful not to refer to Dobson and his supposed connection with the Monte Cristo Mining Syndicate, and he hoped it would not occur to Mrs. Ware to ask about it.

Mrs. Ware was true to her promise and did not ask a question or interrupt Burbank in any way during his recital of the story, but the changing expression of her countenance, an occasional tear, perhaps followed by a smile, the brightening of her eye, the rush of color to her cheeks—all these served to reveal to Burbank's experienced eye the effect the details of the story were having upon her, and he was elated.

"And now," he said in conclusion, "I am ready to answer any questions you may choose to ask me."

"There are a number of questions I will ask you later," said Mrs. Ware, "but there is one I would like to have you answer first, if you will. You told me last night that my folks had nothing to do with your coming to Linville, and I believe you. This statement, instead of clearing matters up, only adds to the mysteriousness of the whole affair. Somehow it seems yet that I am dreaming. Tell me, Chester, why you took such an interest in Harry and the Harold Ware Club. Tell me why you went to so much trouble a year ago to look Harry up and befriend him, and why you have been so generous in contributing to the needs and comforts of the Harold Ware Club during the past year?"

"Your question is really two questions," replied Burbank, "but one answer will suffice for both questions. My answer is simply this, Mildred: There is a love that refuses to die, that time or circumstances cannot annihilate, that lives on and on through the years even though there is apparently no excuse for its continued existence—a love that once born, lives forever. Such was my love for you sixteen years ago, Mildred, such is my love for you today, and such will it be as long as life shall last."

As he spoke, Burbank arose, and, crossing the room, he stood beside Mrs. Ware's chair and gently laid a hand upon her shoulder. She was weeping.

"Mildred," he continued, "perhaps it is not right that I should tell you of my love at this time, but it seemed that it was the only way in which I could answer the questions you asked me. It was because of my love for you that I looked Harry up a year ago, and it was because of my love for you that I became interested in the welfare of the Harold Ware Club. It was my love for you that brought me to Linville yesterday and that induced me to stay over today. It is my love for you, Mildred, that prompts me to ask you to become my wife. Tell me that I may at least hope to make you my wife and I will be the happiest man in the world. I renew my pleadings of sixteen years ago. Will you marry me, Mildred?"

Mrs. Ware was weeping and did not reply for a full minute.

"Oh, Chester," she finally said, "I cannot promise now. Give me time to think it over—please do. I am not myself today. My brain is in a whirl. It all seems like a dream. Please Chester, grant me a little time, will you not?"

"Certainly, I will," replied Burbank, as he bent over and kissed her on the cheek.

CHAPTER XV.

Two years have passed since the events recorded in the last chapter. Chester Burbank and Mildred Ware have been married over a year and are living happily in an elegant home on Drexel boulevard in Chicago. They also have a beautiful country home on the lake, where they spend the summers and which is carefully looked after by a superintendent and assistants the year around. It is known as "The Harold Ware Poultry Farm," and no expense has been spared to make it an ideal poultry farm in every respect. The boy whom we have known as Harry Ware, but now known altogether as Harold Ware, is the sole owner and manager of the farm, his step-father, Chester Burbank, having presented him with a deed, or, rather, having presented him with the farm and placed the deed in trust for him until he shall become of age. Nothing but Single Comb White Leghorns are to be found on the farm, and among them

are some of the choicest in the country. One of the most pleasant surprises of Harold's life came to him when his step-father, after purchasing the farm and erecting the poultry buildings, presented him with a good-sized flock of Single Comb White Leghorns and informed him that they were the progeny of the pen of birds he (Burbank) bought of Harold at the Dexter poultry show three years previous. Burbank had had them carefully taken care of during these three years. Included in the flock were two of the original hens. Harold, now a boy of fifteen, attended school regularly, and while his parents had a college course and a professional career planned for him, he insisted that his greatest ambition was to become a successful poultryman.

"I'll never give up my chickens," he said, "for just look what they have brought me already—a new papa, a beautiful home, happiness for mamma, everything we could desire. And it all came about through a little advertisement offering my chickens for sale. Give up my chickens? I guess not."

* * * * *

Dinner is being served in the luxurious dining room in the Burbank home. Gathered around the table are Mr. and Mrs. Burbank, their son Harold and Mr. Dobson. The latter has just returned from a trip to the old New England home of Mr. and Mrs. Burbank.

* Soon after their marriage Mr. and Mrs. Burbank were surprised to receive word from the old New England home that Mrs. Burbank's father had become financially embarrassed and that unless he could get the use of twenty-five thousand dollars at once he would lose his entire business and would be a bankrupt. Mrs. Burbank had told her husband of the treatment she had received from her father's family, and was surprised, but pleased, when Mr. Burbank suggested that they send her father the money at once. After talking the matter over, it was decided that they would ask Mr. Dobson to take a certified check for the amount and go to the old New England home and make an investigation. If twenty-five thousand dollars would save the business, he was to deliver the check. Dobson was back with-

in a week and reported that it was simply a temporary embarrassment and that the twenty-five thousand dollars would tide things over very nicely. A couple of months later he made his second visit to the same place, on the pretext that he had better keep track of how things were going, and in a few months he thought it necessary to go again. He had just returned from his third visit and was taking dinner with his friends, Mr. and Mrs. Burbank.

"So you think everything is going to come out all right back east, do you, Dobson?" asked Burbank.

"Oh, yes," replied Dobson, "everything is O. K. Everything, including—say, I have a confession to make, and might as well make it right now. You'd never guess it, but say, Chester, and you, too, Mildred, I am to become your brother. Harriet has promised to marry me." And Dobson blushed like a schoolboy.

"Hooray!" cried Burbank, and laying aside all conventionality he jumped up from his chair, rushed around the table and threw his arms around Dobson. Then giving him a terrific slap on the back, he said gleefully:

"Dobson, you're a trump and you've played your cards well. We wondered why you were so anxious about a business in which you had no financial interest, and why you had to make so many trips back east. When is it going to come off, old man?"

"In about six weeks," replied Dobson. "And say, Mildred," he said, addressing Mrs. Burbank, "your sister Harriet feels awful bad because of a letter she wrote you several years ago. I don't know what it was, but I told her you were not one to lay anything up against another person, especially a sister, and that you had forgiven and forgotten long ago."

"Why, bless her dear heart," said Mrs. Burbank, with tears in her eyes, "I haven't laid that up against her for a minute. I will write her a nice letter tomorrow and congratulate her."

"No, don't congratulate her," said Dobson, laughing "It is I who ought to be congratulated."

"Well, say, this is bully," said Burbank. "There's nobody on earth whom we would rather take into our family

than you, Dobson. Is there, Mildred?" he asked, turning to his wife.

"Well, I don't know," she laughingly replied. "I have never really forgiven Mr. Dobson for those awful lies he told me about the Monte Cristo Mining Syndicate, but suppose I will have to do so now that he is to become one of the family."

"Say, Dobson, old man, I have a suggestion to make," said Burbank. "I would suggest that for a wedding trip we all go down to Linville and visit the Harold Ware Club."

"Good idea," replied Dobson, "but I'll have to consult my—my—wife." And he blushed again.

"I don't know whether I can ever learn to love Harriet—Aunt Harriet—or not," murmured Harold, as he left the dining room. "She said I would grow up to be a pauper, she supposed. But I'll try to like her, anyway."

THE END.

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